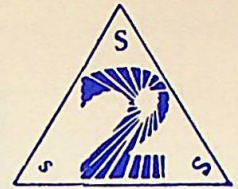


The Tri-Ess

The Femme Mirror

Femme Mirror



Volume 19 Issue 4

Fall 1994



The Official Publication of The Society for the Second Self, Inc.

Fall 1994

The Femme Mirror Fall 1994

The Femme Mirror is the quarterly journal of The Society for the Second Self, Inc., a non-profit corporation. National office: P.O. Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275. Submissions to The Femme Mirror should be sent to: The Femme Mirror, 8880 Bellaire B2, Suite 104, Houston, TX 77036. Letters to the Editor may be directed to Frances Fairfax in care of The Femme Mirror, or to Brenda Thomas, 6804 E. Highway 6 South #334, Houston, TX 77083.

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- 1) The Femme Mirror will not publish the last name of any Tri-Ess member without the expressed written consent of the member, unless the surname is known to be a pseudonym.
- 2) We encourage all contributors to the Mirror to adopt a pseudonym when submitting articles and letters for publication. We request that you place the surname in quotation marks so that we will know it is a pseudonym.
- 3) We request that each contributor include her Tri-Ess number on all material.
- 4) Contributors should avoid use of true last names in letters or articles, and particularly in accounts of chapter activities and other events. We reserve the right to edit such material to remove surnames or other potentially compromising information.

Please help us to serve you in a professional manner. Thank you.

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Thank you, Volunteers!
.And Look Out, here comes some more!
Thanks also to the valiant stuffing crew.
Your help is greatly appreciated!

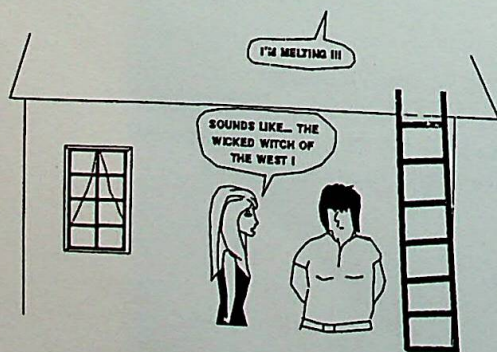
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And in a lighter vein, here are some more cartoons by Sherry Belmar and Susan Blume.

A "ROCKER" NAMED MARY LOUISE
WENT TO WORK IN WHATEVER SHE PLEASED.
THOUGH HER MAKEUP WAS FUN -
OUT CAME THE SUN
AND HER MASCARA RAN DOWN TO HER KNEES.



About Our Cover Girl...

Lisa Ann Jayne (CA-3889-K) is a member of Alpha Chapter in Los Angeles. Like so many others out there in La-La-Land, Lisa is a real TV person. She is a skilled producer of audio and video tapes, and she has produced some audio tapes especially for Tri-Ess. At Holiday En Femme, 1993, Lisa recorded three great seminars, then edited the tapes for a very professional sound. The tapes deal with such issues as "Passing", "Finding a Therapist" and "Achieving a More Feminine Voice." Look for the ad elsewhere in this issue and order yours today!

About This Issue....

As you can see, this Mirror is the biggest one yet, thanks to you, the readers! Keep those articles, letters, cartoons, photos and poems coming, sisters. This time we had to "Just Say No" to any more pages, as it could easily have gone far beyond 72! We do apologize to those whose excellent articles have not yet appeared. Your material is one the top of the stack for the next issue!

Look out, Mirror volunteers! More material will be heading your way shortly to be typed! Thank you so much for all your help in the past.

Please take note of the enclosures. SPICE '95 plans are well along, and preliminary flyers are going out. Also, Carol and Marlene are launching a new Chapter Development campaign. Please seriously consider what you can do to help start a chapter in your area.

Some heavier matters in this issue include Merissa S. Lynn's Guest Editorial, reprinted in the Mirror from the Fall 1994 issue of Tapestry. She says what has needed saying for a very long time. Sharon Ann Stuart's article speaks for itself. She would be the first to tell us that her course of action may not be for everyone. Her courage and honesty are remarkable, to say the least.

If You Are Moving.....

Please Notify us of your Change of Address by writing to:

Donna Martin

P.O. Box 597859

Chicago, IL 60659

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR

TRI-ESS MEMBERSHIP NUMBER!

Executive Director's Page

It's been radio talk time again. I don't relish getting up so early in the morning to do the shows from back East, but I have had people call after the events, so it is worth it. This time, it has been KLAQ from El Paso - thanks to Mike and Patti of that station; WKKR from Toledo, Ohio - thanks to Jeff and Mark; and, WXBQ from St. Louis, MO - thanks to Dan Duffy. And, about a month ago, it was station WKXD of Cookeville, TN - thanks to Mark and T.J.

I earlier mentioned that Madeline in the Washington, D.C., area was interested in establishing a directory of business and professional people. Well, she hasn't forgotten about it. She's been working hard on the project, and has found Susan of New York State, who is interested in assisting her. I believe this directory might be a good thing for our members to consult.

I have found there are many, many Tri-Ess sisters who have businesses of their own, including a number of professionals, such as physicians, chiropractors, attorneys, engineering firms, architects, and a number of other professionals. Once the directory is completed, we need to support our business people as well as the professionals. You who would be covered by such a directory might consider writing Madeline in Virginia (VA-2230-I).

I am happy to report that Audrey (FCAB-1551-V) has run an ad in the Calgary Herald for the past month which read: "Tri-Ess, The Society for the Second Self, an international organization offering support for heterosexual crossdressers and their families, has an expanding chapter in Calgary. Write: etc....." She wrote just recently, informing me that she has already heard from five interested people. I suggest that all chapters who do not have an advertising program try this ad. Let me know if you are successful so I can inform the membership.



Executive Director Carol Beecroft

Remember the library cards we have available for you to insert into the card indexes of local libraries? Well, we still have them available for you. Although some libraries have a computer system, I believe most libraries still have the card indexes. The cards are 3X5 and have a notch cut out at the bottom. They can be inserted quickly into the indexes. The card I am looking at states: CROSSDRESSING - the desire to dress in the clothing of the opposite sex. For information pertaining to crossdressing, including books and an organization for crossdressers, please write to: (and the name and address follow). We have had a lot of success in the past with these library cards. Why don't YOU write for several and do your part in locating new members? In addition, we have had wives and therapists call, so you are doing a very good deed when you place a card in the local library.

Well, here's another reference to a radio show I did - WHNN in Flint, Michigan - thanks to Johnny Burk, Cathy Burns and Nancy Swanton. It's interesting that when

I do one show the news gets around quickly and I start hearing from a number of radio stations. They have some kind of a computer board which mentions guests who are effective!

I recently heard from the Jerry Springer Show. They wanted some people to appear on their program. As you know, I have started a file on Tri-Ess sisters who are interested in appearing on television shows. Each file contains a picture and important data concerning the sister. I have seven persons who are always ready to help. I gave the producer all the names and PHONE NUMBERS. She later called and said she had called all seven. I appreciated her caring attitude in calling me back, but more important was the fact that she did call each person. Perhaps we can gradually get the television shows to use our well-versed sisters. I

think it will develop slowly, but in time we should be able to have enough people in various areas who can be instantly available when a request comes in. All our sisters who are ready to participate are loyal Tri-Ess members. They have taken the time to prepare themselves for a time when they may be called upon. I am grateful for these unselfish gals.

Oh! I also did an interview for an Italian magazine. (I failed to get the correct spelling of the name, but this was not the sensational type of magazine.) The magazine's contact person in New York called me several times and we did an extensive interview. The lady who spoke with me was most interested in the subject, and was most particularly interested in getting the facts. She promised to send me a copy of the magazine.

In line with getting publicity for Tri-Ess, I was contacted by a reporter from the Advance Register, a local California newspaper. He had seen an article about crossdressing and me - in the National

Enquirer - and wanted to do a story locally. Before I leave the National Enquirer article ("Executive Sweet"), I can say they ran a very fair and accurate story. This was somewhat suprising, but I had a promise from the writer that he would stick to the facts, and he did! Anyway, the reporter for the Advance Register did a two-hour interview with me. Then, the next day, I met his photographer downtown for some pictures. Three of the many pictures he took were inserted in the long article. It was featured on the front page with the title: "Living As A Man, Dressing As A Woman". From the front page, the article continued on another page within the paper and took almost half of that page. I thought I would get a lot of letters-to-the-editor flack, but none appeared. The reporter did call later and tell me he had had at least ten calls the next morning, mostly negative. But, the "negative" part was that people thought such an article didn't belong on the front page! I proceeded carefully when going downtown the next day. Business people who know me made a number of kind comments. At least Tulare citizens know more about crossdressing.

I mentioned in an earlier issue of the Femme Mirror that the national office has a press packet for those sisters who want to contact local newspapers in regard to getting an interview with that newspaper. The packet has a cover letter from me, a short article about crossdressing by Ruthann of Wisconsin, and then copies of articles run in various newspapers around the country. I do believe many reporters would be interested in the press packet if sisters would get them into their hands. I ran an article in the Clarion dealing with how to get free publicity for yourself and your local chapter. I hope those who saw the article took it to heart. I might even have the article inserted in a future Femme Mirror. It really is for everyone.

Did you see the English movie, "Just Like A Woman"? It is by far the best movie involving crossdressing I have seen. It is a quality picture with very capable actors. Crossdressing is the major theme. I doubt that it appeared in many theaters due to the subject, or perhaps the distributors for the United States only planned on a limited distribution to begin with. Anyway, I am going to try to get some "rights" to have this film put in a video, then sell it through Chevalier Publications, my little business.

It's really impressive because it portrays exactly how we feel. It was also interesting to see several of the scenes with gatherings of crossdressers, especially the scene in a restaurant where the patrons (mostly) were crossdressers. It was tastefully done. I was surprised!

This movie and others dealing with crossdressing present us with a great opportunity for outreach. Lisa Jayne (CA-3889-K) from Los Angeles came up with the idea of placing brochures about crossdressing in the lobbies of the theaters showing such films. With that in mind, Jane Ellen Fairfax has developed a new triple-fold brochure called: "Do You Know Someone Who Is A Crossdresser?" It gives basic information about crossdressing and Tri-Ess, and can easily fit into the literature racks often found in theater lobbies, or be placed on tables or counters. Jane has sent me a supply of these, so you can write me or Jane and get yours today.

Marissa sent me an ad that appeared in a newspaper some time ago. The ad was for part-time employment for "Apparel Fit Demonstrators." They wanted women of various weights and sizes who wore bras within a certain range of measurements. The women would be trained for these positions, and would be wearing bras in order to check the fit for the company's designers. At the end of Playtex's ad, it mentioned that they were an equal opportunity employer. Marissa wondered if that meant crossdressers, too. She said she was sorry she hadn't applied for one of the jobs. Sad!

It wasn't too long ago that I spoke to a class of potential therapists at National University in Fresno, thanks to Sallie Hunt, who conducted that class. It is interesting to hear questions from more mature people, as compared to students at some of the colleges where I speak. The students at National University were either working on their Master's Degrees or were active in the field of therapy. I felt that I really helped these future therapists, and this is important since THEY will be advising a number of crossdressers and wives. Thanks again, Sallie.

Lastly, Lynda (NJ-1303-F) who is heading up the Holiday En Femme this year (New York City), tells us we will be meeting at the Pennsylvania Hotel. This

The Femme Mirror hotel is close to Greenwich Village, and is an inexpensive cab ride away from bars and restaurants that are FRIENDLY to us. The hotel offers a certain charm and very good facilities for our needs. Side trips will be available, and you can shop at Macy's as they will be EXPECTING us. Workshops will be limited in number but longer. Lynda wants to get us out in public more than in the past, and that is the reason for the limitation of workshops. It sounds like a great event, and we ask that all Tri-Ess sisters support this annual Holiday En Femme. My best regards go to all of you.

Tri-Ess National Helpline!

Do you have a question about Tri-Ess? Do you need help regarding media outreach in your area? Are you interested in starting a Tri-Ess chapter? Tri-Ess Executive Director Carol Beecroft may be reached at the Tri-Ess National Office in Tulare, California at:

1-209-688-9246

Carol is often available to speak to radio audiences via long-distance telephone hook-up, and she is compiling a list of members who are able to appear on radio or television, or speak before college classes.

Does your local chapter have a Helpline? Ideally, each Tri-Ess chapter should operate a Helpline and list the number with the local Crisis Hotline, Gay Switchboard, Mental Health Clinics, etc. The expenses involved would vary with local phone rates and installation charges. As a second, unlisted line in a sister's home, a Helpline does not take a lot of money. What it does take is considerable dedication on the part of the sister volunteering to answer the Helpline. How about it, ladies? Does your chapter have a Helpline yet?

All In The Family

by Merissa Sherrill Lynn

(EDNOTE: Merissa's Editorial in the Fall 1994 issue of *Tapestry* is of such significance that we are reprinting it here by permission.)

Not long ago I received a card. On the cover was a picture of a brick wall. Inside, the caption read, "If you ever feel like talking to (— — —), beat your head against this card until the feeling goes away." It was meant as an inside joke, intended to complement a sign on my door that described the nature of stress. It made me laugh at a time when I desperately needed it. However, the joke eventually wore off, and I threw the card away. That was a big mistake.

Recently, I received two letters that sent me scouring the trash cans in search of that card. The first letter concerned the relationship between the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) and the Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess). The second letter concerned the exclusionary nature of the New Woman's Conference (NWC).

If you know me at all, then you will know why these letters made me feel so frustrated. First, I am a devoted advocate for building a happier and safer world for all members of the crossdressing and transsexual communities, our families, and our friends. My thought is, if we can build a happier and safer world for ourselves, we can, in the process, do the same for everyone else. For that to happen we must accept the responsibility to care about each other, respect each other's differences, and find ways to work together. We created IFGE to pursue that objective while maintaining an attitude of love, respect, and cooperation. Let me say that again. We are working to build a happier and safer world, and do so with an attitude of love, respect, and cooperation.

Next, I am an advocate for developing a strong sense of family, of perceiving everyone who is willing to work together as members of our own special community. As with any family, every individual, Fall 1994



Merissa Sherrill Lynn is the Founding Director of IFGE and Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of Tapestry. Merissa also serves on the Executive Committee of the IFGE Board of Directors and is the Director of the IFGE Coming Together - Working Convention. For those of our readers who may not be familiar with IFGE or Tapestry, its journal, IFGE is the gender community's "big tent" under which our necessarily diverse organizations gather to work toward those goals we hold in common. Merissa is herself a post-operative male-to-female transsexual. Anyone wishing to contact her may do so by writing: Merissa S. Lynn, P.O. Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778-0367 USA.

organization, and service has its own identity, and has dignity, purpose, and value. Tri-Ess, an organization for heterosexual crossdressers and their families, is an indispensable member of our family. As such, we have the obligation to do everything we can to help Tri-Ess fulfill its purpose. In return, Tri-Ess has an equal obligation to help IFGE fulfill its purpose. This is called cooperative action.

Let me give you just some of the ways IFGE and Tri-Ess are working together: IFGE's Winslow Street Fund provided a sizeable grant for the development of the

Spouses' and Partners' International Conference for Education (SPICE). IFGE and Tri-Ess (with AEGIS, the Outreach Institute, and Renaissance) are co-sponsoring a booth at the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) conference. Tri-Ess has invited the IFGE Board of Directors to hold their Fall meeting at Tri-Ess's Holiday En Femme, and IFGE has accepted. Eight members of IFGE's Board are members of Tri-Ess, and many members of IFGE serve on Tri-Ess's Board. The list goes on and on.

I'll tell you plainly. I love Tri-Ess. I love it because of the leaders, workers, and educators it produces. I love it because it is an organization that is devoted to fulfilling its purpose, yet willing to work cooperatively with other organizations. That is exactly what I wish every organization and service in our community would do.

I keep telling people how I feel about Tri-Ess and how IFGE supports Tri-Ess. I keep saying how important it is that the members of our community respect each other, and be able to work together. However, I also keep warning people that we have no chance of working together if we keep finding excuses not to work together. Even more important, we have no chance whatever of overcoming other people's bigotry if we can't overcome our own. If we cannot overcome our own prejudices and unwillingness to work together, the consequences are clear. Our lives will not improve, and neither will the lives of those people we are trying to help. You can imagine how frustrated I feel when people do not hear or understand the message. The authors of the two letters I mentioned earlier clearly did not understand.

As I said, IFGE's attitude towards Tri-Ess is one of love, respect, and cooperation. Unfortunately, we have no control over the attitudes of individuals. Apparently, an argument (or disagreement, or misunderstanding, or whatever) between a member of IFGE and a member of Tri-Ess is what prompted the first letter.

[EDNOTE: To clarify, the letter was from a Tri-Ess member and concerned remarks made by an alleged IFGE spokesman.] Let me give you an idea of what it said. "I feel it is necessary to protest what appears to be IFGE's official policy that Tri-Ess is discriminatory, homophobic and intolerant of other members of the gender community." This person used a private dispute to accuse IFGE of calling Tri-Ess a bunch of homophobic bigots! I was absolutely stunned. There was no truth to the accusation whatsoever, but I could see a tempest coming, and was powerless to stop it.

Sure enough, my fears were realized. That letter found its way into the hands of both the Tri-Ess and the IFGE Boards of Directors. Suddenly the wires were hot with appeals for damage control. Despite our efforts, the ripple effect found its way into our respective memberships and beyond, causing old biases and fears to rear their ugly heads once again. What had started off as a disagreement between two individuals had suddenly escalated into a potentially destructive situation not only for both IFGE and Tri-Ess, but for our community as a whole. Thankfully, cool heads prevailed, apologies were made, and another crisis had passed (but not without a lot of Roloids and aspirin).

The problem was not just with the letter, nor was it with the comments that prompted the letter. The real problem was the attitude that both the letter and the comments exhibited. Attitude! Trying to get people to overcome their anger, their fears, and their biases, and trying to get people to see the damage their anger and bigotry can cause can be so God-awful disheartening. Trying to get people to understand is like picking fist-fights with the fog. It's like painting a beautiful landscape on the sidewalk for all to see, only to have some blind fool with muddy boots walk through the middle of it.

As disconcerting and dangerous as the first letter was, the second one was even worse. Now, I'm a firm believer in the importance of political, social, and educational activism. After all, we are all advocates for something. Perhaps we are advocates for a happier safer world, or for the freedom of gender expression, or simply for the right to eat potato chips in bed. Actively pursuing an objective is how things

get accomplished. However, I also believe there is nothing so dangerous as an activist who is in search of something to be an activist about, and is oblivious to the consequences of his or her actions. Messes get created that are almost impossible to clean up, and that is exactly what happened with the second letter.

The issue concerned the policy of the New Woman's Conference (NWC) being for post-operative male-to-female transsexuals (new women) only. The author of the letter wanted the NWC to be opened to all people who were self-identified as transsexual women, regardless of whether or not they have had surgery. The threat was that if NWC was not open to all transsexual women, than a gang of transsexual activists was going to disrupt the event.

We must accept the responsibility to CARE

Before I tell you what the letter said, and the consequences of it, let me tell you a bit about about the New Woman's Conference. The NWC was a lovely little event (less than 30 participants) founded by a group of educators and leaders who also happened to be new women. The purpose of the NWC was to celebrate the completion of what could arguably be called the most profound transformation a human being could undergo. It was a private event for very special people to bond, to laugh, and cry, and share. The NWC came into existence because of the logistical and financial support of both the Outreach Institute and IFGE. The NWC came into existence because a special need was identified, and individuals, collaborating with our community as a whole, worked together to satisfy that need. The NWC was a magnificent example of what can happen if each individual works for the benefit of all, and all of us, as a community, work together for the benefit of each individual. As Alexandre Dumas so

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eloquently put it, "One for all, and all for one!"

Now, let's look at the rhetoric used in the second letter. (Keep in mind that the purpose of the letter was to get self-identified transsexual women who had not yet had surgery invited to the NWC). "A storm is fast approaching our community, and its name is 'EXCLUSION.' ... By limiting diversity, we limit ourselves.... Stopping the discrimination of people because they are different is what the Human Rights movement is all about.... Should they be turned away [speaking of those who intended to crash the party], it'll only deepen the rift in the community.... The community is becoming annoyed with the elitist position taken by people who have had surgery.... The origin of this caste system is a construct perpetrated upon us by the doctors and the Benjamin Standards of Care.... We are responsible for the perpetuation of this classism and now must pay the bill of Post-Op Elitism.... When an empowered group of people excludes a disempowered group, it's called discrimination.... Let's stop dividing ourselves."

Oh, the poor NWC! It is now accused of being exclusionary, of limiting diversity, and of being discriminatory. It was accused of causing a rift in the community, of being classist, and elitist. Caste system? Classist and elitist? It sounded like text from The Communist Manifesto. That stinker of a letter was written to get a reaction. It succeeded admirably, although the reaction was probably not the one the author had hoped for. There were a few people who supported the letter, but for the most part it caused an explosion of anger and defiance. It caused a rift within the NWC as well as among the transsexual activists. By making the NWC an object of political controversy, it damaged the NWC's ability to fulfill its purpose. By creating an atmosphere of confrontation, it not only damaged the transsexual community's ability to work together, it damaged the ability of our community as a whole to work together. In turn, the ripple effect damaged the ability of our community as a whole to work with other communities. It has created an ugly atmosphere of conflict and distrust, rather than cooperation. The real tragedy of all this is that I sincerely believe the author was trying to do the right thing. The lesson to be learned is, those who use this kind of

"There is a word for those who advocate for inclusion but practice exclusion. It's called hypocrisy. There is another word for those who advocate for inclusion for organizations and events that can only be effective if they remain exclusive. It's called irresponsible. No organization and no event can be all things to all people..."

rhetoric to warn us of a possible rift in the community, can usually find a way to make it happen. The author of this letter has succeeded in making it happen.

Another problem was that the author's idea of community consisted exclusively of self-identified male-to-female transsexuals. That effectively eliminated female-to-male transsexuals. It also eliminated those who were not transsexuals, those who didn't have any idea who or what they were, and those who may be eligible but didn't wish to be identified with such a community. It's difficult to be more exclusionary, discriminatory and elitist than that. There is a word for those who advocate for inclusion but practice exclusion. It's called hypocrisy. There is another word for those who advocate for inclusion for organizations and events that can only be effective if they remain exclusive. It's called irresponsible. No organization and no event can be all things to all people, least of all the New Woman's Conference.

The last, and perhaps the greatest problem, is the rhetoric itself. It is the same kind of language that has been used to attack Tri-Ess, and IFGE, and the Holiday En Femme, and the Coming Together Convention. It is the same kind of language that has been used to attack every community, sub-community, group, service, or event that caters to a specific group of people, or a specific need. It is the same kind of rhetoric that is pandemic in our community, in our communications, and in our newsletters. It is the same kind of rhetoric used in the first letter.

Both letters briefly hinted at the benefits of unity and cooperation. That's nice. Then, between those sparsely used niceties, both authors became overwhelmed by their own hotheaded magniloquence. They let their passions overcome their common sense, and they spewed out the kind of reckless jargon that makes people angry and defensive, and makes unity and cooperation impossible.

The words "exclusionary" and "discriminatory" were used as though they were the same thing, and then IFGE, Tri-Ess, and the NWC were criticized on that basis. These words do not mean the same thing. Exclusionary means separate, or apart, and discriminatory means prejudice, or bigotry. Both Tri-Ess and the NWC cater to a specific group of people in our community. Of course they are exclusionary. They are also selective. If they weren't, they wouldn't be effective. Because they are exclusionary and selective

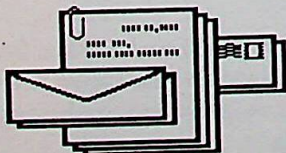
does not make them bad people. That does not make them prejudiced, bigoted, homophobic, classist, elitist, chauvinistic, or any other negative adjective you can think of. It simply allows them to fulfill their purpose.

The leaders, members, and participants of Tri-Ess and the NWC are good people fulfilling a specific need. I would even go so far as to say the authors of these two letters are both good and well-intentioned people. I just don't think they fully realized the damage they could do. For that matter, I don't think any of us truly realizes the damage we can do when we let our passions and our biases get the better of us. When will we ever learn? Perhaps never. In that case, the best we can do is hang our heads and say, "Forgive us, for we know not what we do."

Every one of us is an individual with different interests, and different needs. We are all bound to have our own opinions, and have misunderstandings, and bouts of anger and defiance. However, if we build a solid foundation, a strong sense of family, we can build on the good and survive the bad. We can tend to our own needs and allow others to tend to their needs without ever feeling abandoned or excluded.

We can always feel that we are part of something that is greater than ourselves, something that will always be there for us. We can acknowledge that there will be disagreements, misunderstandings, and squabbles. But we can survive. After all, it's all in the family.

**When will
we ever learn?
Perhaps never.
In that case, the
best we can do is
hang our heads and
say, "Forgive us,
for we know not
what we do."**



Editorial Expressions

by Brenda Thomas

The Femme Mirror

Ah, the wonders of electronic media.....

In one of our back issues we talked about several of the girls who had journeyed from the Prodigy on line computer service to the GENie service. All seems well with those who have made the move. Unfortunately, to date, I have not been able to afford to make the move myself.

Along with those on GENie, I am also aware of several ladies proclaiming the benefits of Tri-Ess on AOL (America On Line). There also appear to be several of our members on CompuServe. These are all good services that cater to the individuals who wish to correspond via the wonders of electronic media.

There are also other areas offering us the benefit of personal and private correspondence through other bulletin board services (BBS). There is the Tri-Ess BBS in the Atlanta, Georgia, area, run by Rachel and Kathy. I understand through the grapevine that this is a wonderful medium to reach other Tri-Ess members. From what I have been able to learn, there is an off-line reader (OLR) area so you can jump up on the board, download the messages, and read everything off-line. This saves lots of money on long distance calls. You can read and compose replies to whatever messages interest you, then dial up and upload all messages at once. For those of you who have not used this type of feature, I can personally tell you that you can download about 50 or 60 messages in just over one minute. Couple this with uploading your responses, and your total time on-line is just over two minutes. How's that for inexpensive?

There is also another board for Tri-Ess members running out of Woodland Hills, CA- Cross Connection BBS. This board is operated by Kimberleigh Richards, and offers InterNet mail, UseNet International Gender Forums, five local gender forums, and a Tri-Ess National Forum, not to mention the other services that most BBS's offer. Again, not having dialed up this Board, I am not sure if there



is an OLR, but I would assume there is. Most BBS's have an OLR door. It saves you and them money.

There is also a gender board here in Houston called Carolyn's Place. Carolyn has been gracious enough to set up a Tri-Ess area on her board. It has just recently gotten started and as yet is still a small one. It does not have OLR, unfortunately.

A resource many may overlook are the local BBS's in your own areas. Here in Houston I use two such boards. One, A Little Corner in Time, is a free board that carries the FIDOnet echo. FIDOnet has a gender dysphoria echo on it, and I have met some wonderful people on line. I even ran into a couple of ladies I had once met on Prodigy, back when I was active on that Board. When I first found it, I asked the sysop (System Operator) if he would add the Gender echo for me. I explained to him why I wanted this echo. He was very impressed with my honesty and immediately added the echo. He is currently trying to add TGNet to his board. TGNet carries a Gender echo for transsexuals, a Dressing UP echo for crossdressers, and yet another echo (one I am not currently familiar with) for all transgendered people. So you see, even if you do not have access to some of the long distance boards you can still dial up a local board and log on to the electronic GENDER communication talk channels.

The other board I am involved with besides the FIDOnet is the USNet area from the InterNet. UseNet has an "alt.transgendered" area that is open to all transgendered people and anyone else who is interested. I have seen very little "flaming" on the InterNet. One advantage of this board is it automatically issues its users an InterNet address so you can receive personal E-Mail. This makes global communication possible for little or no money.

Some of you may remember back a couple of years ago when we ran the Prodigy ID numbers of members who were then on Prodigy. Well, what about doing a new column and listing the InterNet E-Mail addresses of those members who have one? In fact, we should probably have a computer column in future issues. We could include info on computers, programs, BBS's, InterNet access and E-Mail accounts. All I need now is someone to write it. GET IT?

Another advantage to using the BBS's or the InterNet E-Mail address is the ability to get data from one person to another for publication and/or sharing without having to mail a disk or a letter.

This should come in handy:

1. **Tri-Ess BBS**
Atlanta, GA
404-922-2414
404-785-9216
2. **Cross Connections**
Woodland Hills, CA (L.A. area)
818-841-8887
3. **Carolyn's Place**
Houston, TX
713-579-3567
4. **A Little Corner**
Houston, TX
713-451-6066

When you log on to the Tri-Ess BBS in Atlanta, you must log on as:
Name? Sigma Epsilon
Password? TriEss

So! Now all I need is to hear from the rest of you and see what we can develop to improve communications between all members.

Fall 1994

Letters to the Editor

EDNOTE: To continue with my message on the previous page, the following E-mail addresses are furnished for you:

Brenda.Thomas@PSL-online.com
Kymmcr@xconn.com

Now, how about the rest of you?

Dear Brenda,

Wow! What a review! I wouldn't have had the nerve to write one that good, even if I was doing it myself. I couldn't be more pleased, and best of all, your assessment confirms the message is on target. It is sometimes difficult to know if the words are hitting the mark or not, and I appreciate your perspective. I thank you for your support. It is of great value to me.

I have also been fortunate enough to receive some excellent editorial assistance from Vivian Allen of Tapestry, and based on Vivian's comments, am busily doing one last rewrite of the manuscript. The basic message isn't changing, but the tone will be greatly improved. I'm excited about the improvements, and expect to finish by mid-September.

I am working on obtaining a manuscript publisher, and that is my next task. Previously I had selected one, but

they hadn't selected me. We have had enough correspondence in the past to encourage me to give them one more shot. With your marvelous review, and the improved presentation, they'll just have to say, "YES!" I'll keep you posted.

Thanks again, Brenda, for helping me bring this book to the attention of many others.

Warmest regards,

.....Rachel

EDNOTE: I only present this letter to let you all know that the manuscript we reviewed in the Spring Femme Mirror, "The Bliss of Becoming One," is progressing toward publication. I will let you know when to expect to find a copy in the book stores, or how to order one.

.....Brenda

Dear Jeanette,

I write a column called "Allison's Femail Box" in the Emerald City News. It's two pages of excerpts from other club's newsletters we receive in exchange for ours. After two years of reading club bulletins, Tapestry, The Femme Mirror, Cross-Talk, etc., etc., etc., I'm beginning to

feel a little jaded. I know our readers are interested in the light-hearted, the original, and the things that are real news within the community. There is so much that is none of these.

I was delighted when I came to your article in the Spring issue of The Femme Mirror. In the first place, the Michelles and the Karens are not a localized problem; the Northwest is full of them too. But nobody's ever picked up on the humor of it before with such wit as you displayed.

Thanks for contributing my laugh of the month.

What would you think about Sharon Karen Marsh of maybe Glenda Brenda Thomas?

A Mister in sisterhood,

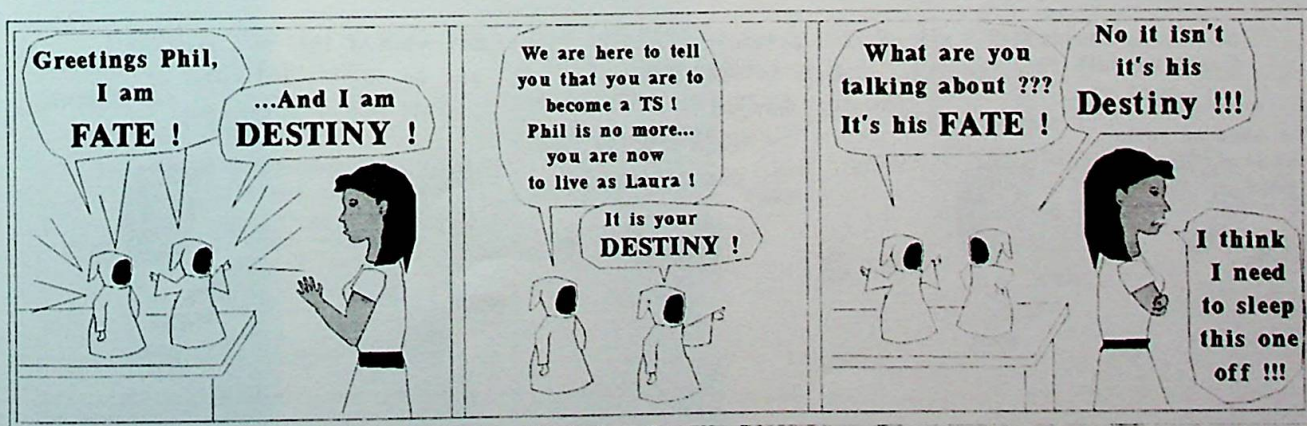
.....Allison

EDNOTE: Really, Allison, Glenda Brenda Thomas? NOT! I haven't seen Jeanette in several months so I decided to place your letter to her here in the Letters to the Editor. I know she always reads them and tries to outdo me. Which she usually does.

.....Brenda

CD

By Sherri Belmar



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Dear Brenda,

Far be it from me to extol the attributes of feminine panties...

After all...a rose by any other name is still a rose.... Yes?

Maybe, if you are female, but watch out for the thorns if you are a male trying to find the proper fit.

After years of trying to find the perfect panty to wear for everyday, and God knows I have tried most of them, I have finally found one tht doesn't make you feel like you've checked into a cheap hotel.

What on earth am I talking about? Those of you semi-educated out there reading this know that cheap hotels have no _____ room.

Finally, at last, voila! Thank you, thank you, thank you! I have found the proper hotel.

All this time there it was, just hanging on the racks at almost every major store in the country. There it was in the catalog from which both my wife and I order our panty hose.

There just has to be a crossdresser in the design room at Bali! I know there is. I just haven't met her yet. But I do intend to write her a letter and express my gratitude.

Have any of you tried the Bali "Lacy Skamp" bikini? If not, let me tell you that you are in for a treat. Great feel, fit and comfort. Wide enough in the areas that

need to be, seamed seat for better fit, high cut for freedom..... I could write their ad for them if they wouldn't blush!

But enough about that. Just give them a try.

.....A Happy Sister

EDNOTE: Having read this letter and all its praises, I must admit to going and purchasing a pair to try them out. My assessment? No truer words were ever spoken!

.....Brenda

Dear Brenda,

I wrote an article that appeared in the Spring issue of the Femme Mirror [EDNOTE: See page 49 of that issue] and I felt compelled to write again.

Upon reading my article, I found I wasn't clear on some points and overly optimistic on others. Case in point: My "final entry" into the world won't be as easy as I wrote. It will take time and support. But I Believe it will happen. How long it will take, no one can say. I can only hope it won't be very long in coming.

On the subject of telling spouses, girlfriends, significant others, etc., I didn't mean for anyone to think this is the best way to handle your personal situation. I suggest you examine your situation and/or relationship very carefully before you mention your crossdressing.

Finally, on my quote from The Dark Crystal [EDNOTE: a children's sci-fi/fantasy movie of several years ago that has some surprising things to say about gender], our separation (or sundering, if you prefer) comes from society's standard for the roles of men and women and how they are expected to act. Society may never accept us, but we don't have to try to please "them". We have to please only ourselves. Let society wonder. We are complete by crossdressing, and that is enough. At least, it should be. It may not be for everyone, (and I admit it isn't enough for me at times) but it may be a start.

To all who read my article (cross-dressers and genetic females alike), I would appreciate any questions or comments on it you may have. If you agree with my thoughts (or even if you don't) please feel free to let me know. Even if it's to say you think I've put my foot in it. Okay?

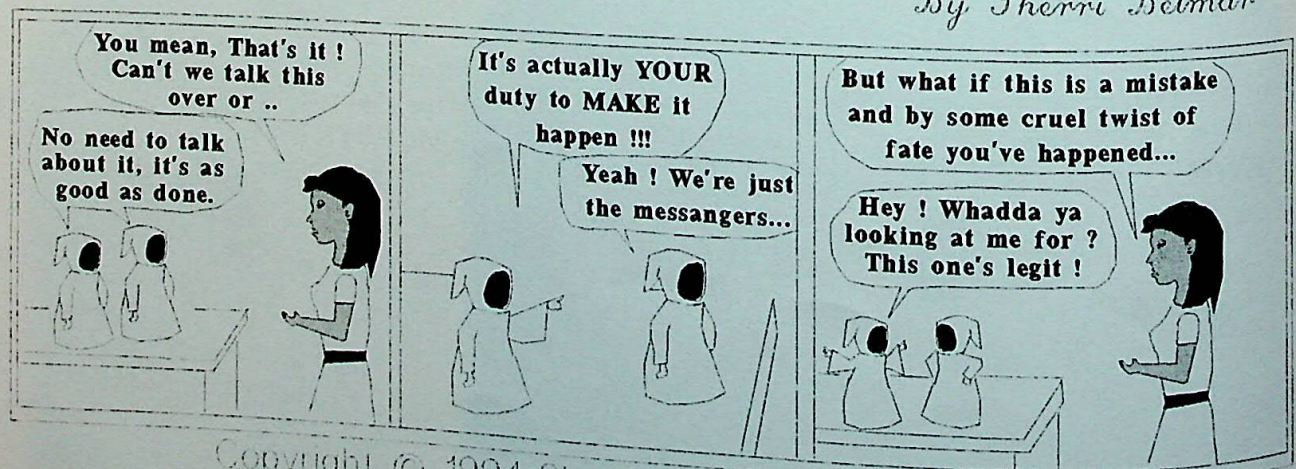
.....Lynda (CA-3663-H)

EDNOTE: I certainly agree with you on the subject of telling one's spouse. Readers, any comments for Lynda?

.....Brenda



By Sherri Belmar



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Dear Jane Ellen,

The Femme Mirror just arrived and it is truly overwhelming to not only be the Cover Girl, but to receive such nice thoughts. The description fills my cup to overflowing. Thank you so much.

There is one error which I am worried about. Our Barbara Lee was the first Barbara, and I believe was even one of the founders of Chi Chapter when it was a chapter of FPE. I hope this does not hurt her feelings. It so happened that she had dropped out for a few years at the time I joined in 1981, so I was THE Barbara for about eight years until Barbara Lee returned to the fold. I don't think she qualifies for #1 since she wasn't around, having absented herself for a while, but I did write her my regrets since she really was the first.

Fondly,

.....Barbara (IL-1176-C)

EDNOTE: This sort of concern for a sister's feelings is one of the many things that makes Barbara so special.

Frances
EDNOTE: We received a number of responses to the article, "If You're Going To Be A Female, Please Don't Be An Airhead" by E. Fenton (page 47 in the Spring issue). Some were to be forwarded directly to Ms. Fenton, and others were submitted for publication in the Mirror. Two such letters follow:

Dear Editors,

This is a commentary on the article by E. Fenton.

It is wonderful that we all have our own ideas and we should be tolerant of others. For myself, I can't see her views, but I can see where she has come from. I see many females with the same ideas. I did not say "ladies" as my idea of a lady and hers don't agree.

Many females try so hard to copy men they have forgotten the aspect of being a lady. They have forgotten such things as kindness, tenderness, caring, fairness and other aspects such as a true lady should have. Yes, there are many men who try being a female but forget all the attributes of being a lady. Being a lady is a feeling, a state of mind, an urge to do the best at what you are doing.

There are many females walking around. If they would just look in the mirror and examine themselves, they would be better off. As to being a bimbo for reading "Cosmo," all people don't like the same magazines, but in reading and looking at various magazines we get a rounded view of life.

When I was younger I had the good fortune to have a lady friend who made the statement, "Put on your best appearance and your best manners in whatever you do." To be a lady you have to remember that. (She didn't know I dressed, but maybe she guessed!)

In closing, you may make the statement, "Clothes make the man, but not the woman." I disagree on each. Personality plus clothes make each. We must be well rounded to present ourselves to the fullest.

.....Lea (MI-3820-K)

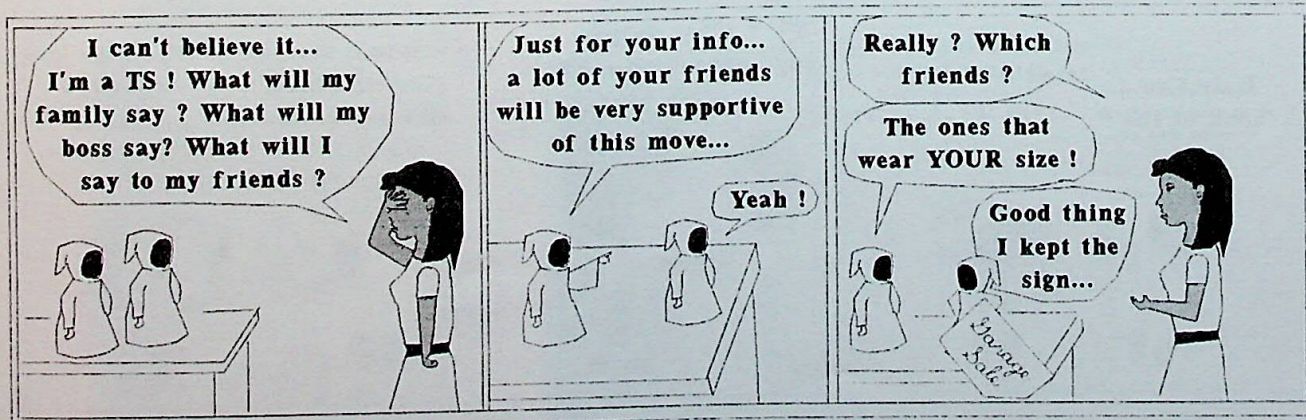
Dear Editors,

I'd like to respond to E. Fenton's commentary in the Spring 1994 issue of the Femme Mirror. ("If You're Going To Be A Female, Please Don't Be An Airhead") I agree with her sentiments completely. I've been out of my personal closet since 1988, and I've been trying to develop my entire personality in addition to working on my wardrobe.

I became active in Women's Rights two years ago, after having realized that I have a responsibility to women as a crossdresser: *If I am going to live even a few hours as a woman, if I'm going to talk lipstick and heels, then I have to take on some of the same issues that women face on a daily basis!* I escort women to and from the two local clinics as a volunteer in my town, and I'm a member of the National Organization for Women. I've learned only a little about what it means to be a woman from being in a room full of women discussing sexual harassment, rape, abuse, and other very important concerns, things I can't even imagine, with effects I can't relate to because I've never been subjected to such horrid treatment. I think this is one of the things that keeps me from really understanding what it means to be a woman.

CD

By Sherri Belmar



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I'd pretty much be a washout as a woman. The clothing - the external femininity, if you will - is the easy part. It's not difficult to wear a skirt, or to put on makeup. The mannerisms and voice are more difficult, and require even more practice in order for one to overcome decades of practice in being male. The hardest part - the part that would tell on me - is the "spiritual" femininity - the internal, emotional part where the real woman resides, somewhere in that wonderful female mind.

Ms. Fenton put it like this: "Femininity is a complex stew of attitudes, emotions, mannerisms, hormones, physique, mystique, strategies, actions, and reactions - I can understand your fascination with it." She goes on to say that we'll need to study harder if we want to know what makes women tick.

It's so very true. I'd personally like to pursue a Master's Degree in femininity just so that I could appreciate women more.

But, no college or university I know of offers such a study course. The only option I can think of is this: we crossdressers need to try a little harder to learn from the women we love. Talk to her. She's the expert, and the best teacher you're going to find.

What does being a woman mean to men? I'd have to say that motherhood is very important. I've wondered what it would be like, conceiving a new life, bringing that child into the world, feeding it from my own body. I'll never know, and that's my loss.

I don't think I can define all of the many things - the feelings, the thoughts - that the word *woman* means to me. I have a tendency to think of femininity as a very beautiful quality of a woman's being, a vital part of who she is. It's about emotion, close friendships, humor, compassion, a thousand-thesaurus list of words and connotations that can't begin to truly express my feelings or thoughts.

I suppose a simple way of expressing it would be this: Being a woman means trying to become a better person by caring for and about others; being considerate of others' feelings; being dependable; working toward equity between partners. I know there's much more, but I don't know what to say.

I'm single right now, and so I don't have a proper teacher to show me what I really need to know about being a woman. I'm pretty much self-taught with the actual crossdressing, and I've tried to dress the way women do in real life. It's a classic example of learning by example. But no matter how well one dresses, she is still going to be judged on other things than appearance.

Remember Mrs. Doubtfire? (If you haven't seen it, rent or buy and watch it immediately!) Robin Williams' character plays the part of a 60-year-old English woman. To be accepted in this role, he obviously needed to look like an older woman. He had to dress the part. (Mrs. Doubtfire isn't going to wear a mini skirt, for example.) Even more importantly, he had to sound, feel, smell, and act like that

The Femme Mirror woman. It wouldn't do if he showed up smelling of "Old Spice," had five-o'clock shadow, and acted like a dock worker, if he's supposed to be a lady from England. It's the appearance that we all see and react to first, but it's the personality and behavior of the person that makes an even larger impression.

Womanhood is a lifetime accomplishment, something which won't come easily to someone who doesn't study womanhood. It's in constant growth, like a beautiful plant... and in women, it is in full and perfect bloom. Cultivate it.

Sincerely,

.....Anne L. Garner (FL-2786-W)

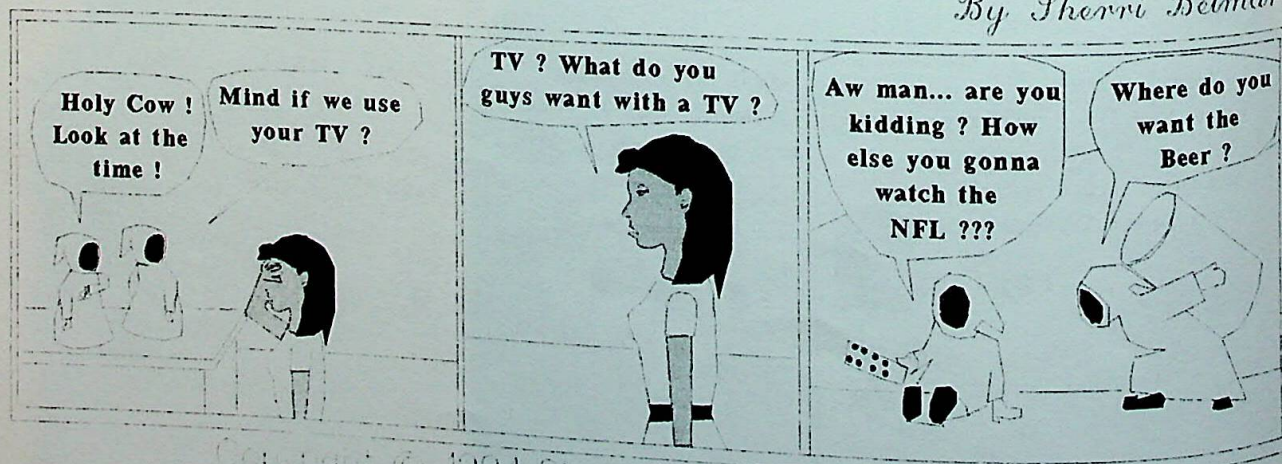
EDNOTE: Speaking as a woman, I have to say that I agree with most of what Anne and Lea have to say. I also agree with Ms. Fenton, who states quite frankly that she is speaking partly out of a need for catharsis. To borrow from Lea's letter, it is obvious there are more "females" (genetic or otherwise) walking around than there are "ladies."

.....Frances

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The opinions and views expressed in the Femme Mirror are those of the respective contributors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policies of The Society for the Second Self, its Officers and Board Members.

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By Sherri Belmar

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Chapter News Update



New Jersey

DATELINE: TRENTON

Legislation that would extend the state's "hate laws" to cover crimes against persons because of gender or disability recently passed the New Jersey Senate by a lopsided vote of 37 to 2. Recent Supreme Court rulings have taken the position that the state cannot regulate speech. According to the forwarded bill, however, speech would be judged on the standard of whether it "exposes another to the threat to violence." Recently the New Jersey State Supreme Court also upheld the New Jersey law that imposes tougher sentences for hate crimes based on race, color, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity. The new bill adds "gender" and "handicap" to that list. Accurately summing up the position, Senator Jack Sinagray (R-Middlesex) argued, "Acts of hatred should not be tolerated in our society." Perhaps another category, "gender expression," should be added.



This month the ladies of Sigma Nu Rho are celebrating their 7th anniversary. On September 26, 1987, eleven (11) crossdressers and seven (7) spouses met at the Sheraton Motor Lodge in Bordentown, New Jersey to found Sigma Nu Rho Chapter of Tri-Ess. For their celebration the sisters of Sigma Nu Rho returned to the same hotel, which is now the Holiday Inn Express. The New Jersey chapter has a lot, indeed, to celebrate. Their News Briefs newsletter has blossomed into perhaps the premier newsletter in the crossgender community.

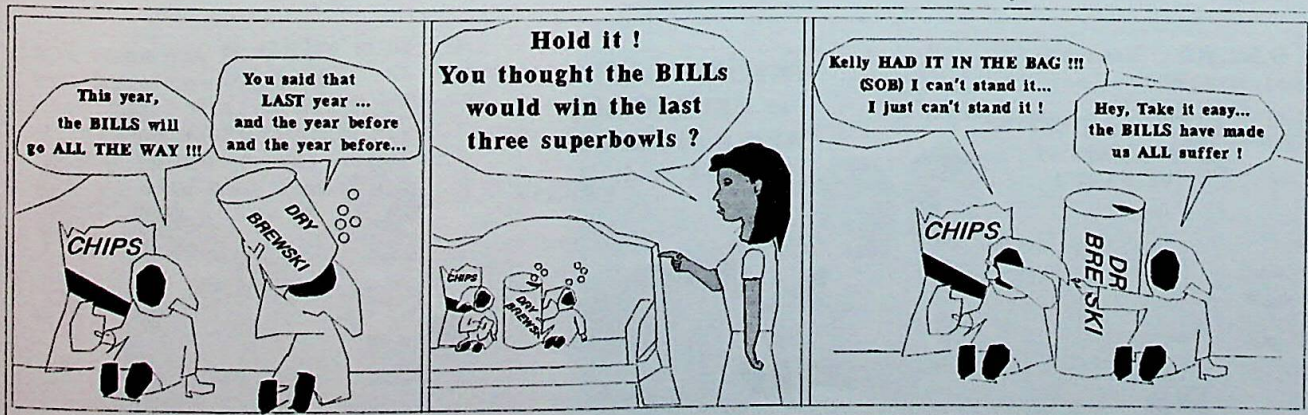
Over the past year Tri-Ess membership in the Zip Codes covered by Sigma Nu Rho, has increased 70%! The chapter has struck up a friendship with nearby gender support organizations. Promises Donna Marie, chapter president, "Over the next year I hope we can find new ways to accomplish more."

At a recent meeting Sigma Nu Rho honored Georgia Ann its Sister of the Year. Affectionately referred to as "the crazy redhead," Georgia Ann is responsible for much of the vitality Sigma Nu Rho has shown. She has developed a Southern connection with a friendly outreach to the Washington-Baltimore Alliance, and hosted a memorable event, the Ocean City, Maryland, get-together. Congratulations, Georgia Ann, on your energy, untiring work and sparkling personality!

From Sigma Nu Rho also come some tips by Jerry Lee on deportment. Jerry Lee advises us, "A lady seats herself gracefully by backing up to the sofa until her calves touch the edge, then gently lowering her derriere onto the sofa, keeping her back straight. Putting her hands down at her sides for support, she gently slides back." Addressing problems camouflaging the bearded area under lighting or photoflash, Jerry Lee offers the following advice:

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By Sherri Belmar



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"Before you put on your makeup, take bright red lipstick and dot it over the beard area and then rub it in so that your skin looks like it's sunburned. Let it set for about 15 minutes. Then put on your foundation and the rest of your makeup over that. You will find that you need a lot less makeup to cover the problem area." This is a perfectly logical principle as the red counteracts the bluish cast of the beard. In this way we can use less makeup so that we avoid a mask-like, artificial appearance.

Significantly, members of Sigma Nu Rho have been engaging in activities which will make our society a better place in which to live. Not long ago, Megan Kanka, a seven-year-old girl, was brutally molested and murdered by a twice-convicted felon. Deeply moved by her unfortunate fate, Donna Marie made Megan the cover girl for the August, 1994 issue of *News Briefs*. Outraged by this senseless act, the legislature was considering "Megan's Law" to get such violent abusers off the streets forever. Making Megan's cause of her own, Donna circulated petitions in her community, in support of Megan's Law.

Recently Stacie discovered an emporium selling tee-shirts crudely attacking gays. Terming such entrepreneurs "money-grubbing fools," she spoke boldly out in her chapter newsletter. Apparently these tasteless shirts have created a furor in exalted circles in New Jersey. Governor Christine Whitman (R-New Jersey) protested, "The message insults the gay community and is offensive to anyone who sees it. It is demeaning to individuals and is little more than an appeal to personal bias

and bigotry." Adding action to words, Governor Whitman dispatched a letter to the Chairman of General Mills suggesting that he look into a possible trademark infringement lawsuit against the peddlers of these tee-shirts. "The tee-shirts are so deeply offensive and potentially harmful that I felt I had to speak out publicly," said Governor Whitman. How right the Governor is! This type of mind-set, which spews venomous hate over innocent people, affects all of us, and it behooves all of us, like Stacie and Governor Whitman, to speak out and let it be known that this offensive behavior will not be tolerated.



Illinois

DATELINE: CHICAGO

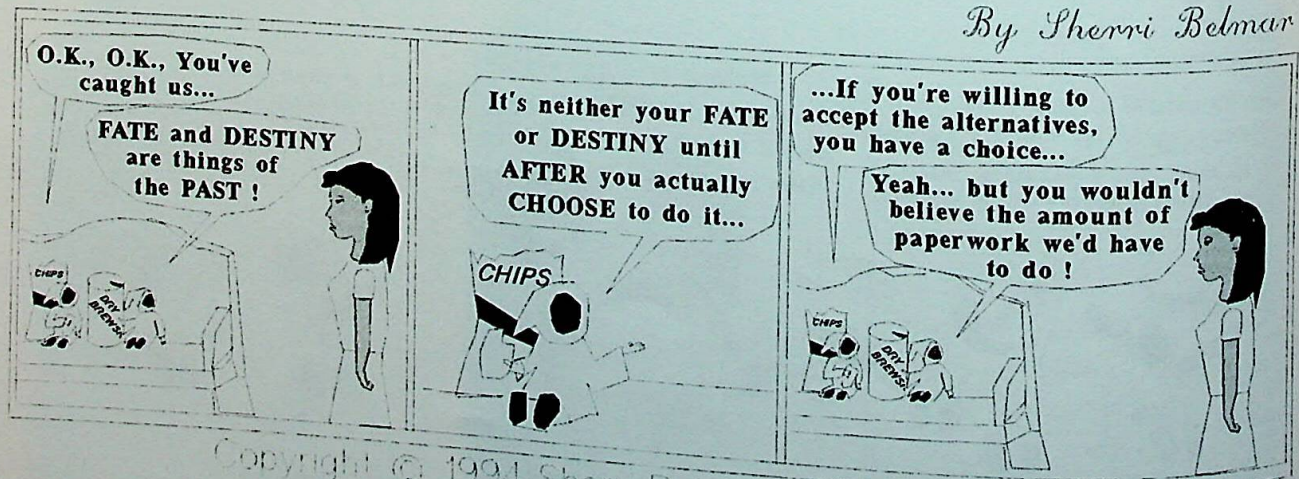
The Couples' Group at Chi Chapter is undergoing expansion and a thorough redefinition of its vision. In her column, "Understanding Us", Susan B., Couples' Group Coordinator, describes the couples' meeting as "a unique time that people use to learn and grow, unlike the social time of the regular meeting. Couples come together to try to work out differences and learn what has worked for others as well." The Couples' Group will be self-facilitated. As part of its vision it will sponsor socials

twice a year, to include either dinner or *The Femme Mirror* dinner and a show. Spinning off from the Couples' Group will eventually be a women's group. In its recent meeting, the couples' session focused on "pet peeves." Joy, facilitator of the session, gave all members the assignment of determining two pet peeves and working to modify them during the upcoming month. Supporting the re-vitalization was President Gloria Wright: "I really see this as one of the more important tasks we have as a support group... I applaud the work they are doing."

From Athena comes the wisdom that one's personality can be deduced by an examination of the lipstick in the tube. The control freak, for instance, boasts a lipstick shape that is unscathed, like new. Since controllers are very precise about everything, they are equally precise in the application of their lipstick. The lipstick of the executive, however, is flat across. Such high-powered professionals, busy and efficient, apply their lipstick straight across, pressing hard. In this way the point gets mushed down and the appearance becomes flat.

The Marilyn Monroe glamour queen type purses her lips and applies her lipstick quickly and forcefully; thus, her lipstick demonstrates a rounded shape. The busy mom, however, doesn't have time for all this. She pulls her lips tight and ONE! on the lower lip and TWO! on the upper lip, and she is finished. Such an application technique leaves her lipstick shape slightly angled.

CD



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More hair or less hair? That is the dilemma most of us face at one time or another. Those long, glamorous curls make us feel oh-so-feminine, but they are somehow inappropriate for a 50-year-old mature lady. What to do? Aunt Babs Babushka (AKA Naomi!) offers her own testimony: "I too like lots and lots of long, long hair and that is what I used to wear. I loved it! Now I wear a much shorter, fluffy hairdo which softens my face. Those who have known me for a long time have kindly told me that I look younger and prettier than I did 10 years ago. One has a choice, either look more feminine or feel more feminine. My own problem is resolved by seeing that my friends, in paying me these compliments, give me enough of a feminine boost to make up for not having that wonderful feel of a long, smooth pageboy swinging around when I turn my head (To tell the truth, I would still rather have that lustrous pageboy, but I bow to external opinions). Make your own choice. I did!"

When two of our most outstanding chapters come together, you can bet there will be a lot of sharing, and both organizations will be the better. At the July meeting of Chi Chapter Lauren Hester spoke and discussed the very effective Newcomers' Program at Sigma Epsilon. Now a similar newcomers' session has blossomed at Chi. DeeDee and Amanda are on hand at the regular meeting room to welcome newcomers and provide a chance to talk together about crossdressing, its challenges and concerns. For those who have been away for a while, the newcomers' session also is a good way to get back into touch.

Being discussed also are crossdresser ID's. If one is stopped by the police, one may avert a potentially awkward situation by having an alternate feminine identification. In this way the police officer can see that the person driving the car is identical with his "brother," whose picture appears on the driver's license. Such a card can also come in handy when cashing a check enfemme.

The Mirror would like to express its condolences to Gloria on the death of one of her best friends, her cat Spirit, age 19. Spirit was Gloria's roommate before her marriage and had stayed with her as Gloria's family grew. The fact that Gloria was a crossdresser made no difference to Spirit. He was always someone in whom she could confide her deepest feelings and always seemed to understand. As Gloria eulogized, "Animals give their love and affection unconditionally. You don't have to have a certain color hair or look a certain way or have just the right religion, vocation or upbringing. You don't have to wear just the right kind of clothing. If you love and treat them well, they will be by your side forever." In some ways cats have the advantage of us humans.



New Mexico

DATELINE: ALBUQUERQUE

Kudos to "Editor by Default" CJ! When Marsha Michaels, editor of the Fiesta Newsletter, was hospitalized with an extended illness, CJ stepped forward and served. From out of the pages of the newsletter sparkled her delightful personality that radiated fun, femininity and fellowship. The graphics of the medical equipment as she related Marsha's hospital stay, and the two children with the walkie-talkie as she called for members to attend the August meeting, were darling! For Marsha she had a little proverb bouquet from China, "The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials." Then came, "Hang in there Marsha, perfection is on its way."

The August meeting proved quite lively. Discussions ranged from plutonium to nuclear weapons to transsexuals to the existence of God and whether it can be proved by mathematics! Jaye's recent trip to Spain and Janet's experience on the Dignity Cruise were related in vivid pictures. There was even one of Janet with the Captain of the Serenade.

In a previous newsletter the question was raised, "Why do you crossdress?"

CD

By Sherri Belmar



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"Before you put on your makeup, take bright red lipstick and dot it over the beard area and then rub it in so that your skin looks like it's sunburned. Let it set for about 15 minutes. Then put on your foundation and the rest of your makeup over that. You will find that you need a lot less makeup to cover the problem area." This is a perfectly logical principle as the red counteracts the bluish cast of the beard. In this way we can use less makeup so that we avoid a mask-like, artificial appearance.

Significantly, members of Sigma Nu Rho have been engaging in activities which will make our society a better place in which to live. Not long ago, Megan Kanka, a seven-year-old girl, was brutally molested and murdered by a twice-convicted felon. Deeply moved by her unfortunate fate, Donna Marie made Megan the cover girl for the August, 1994 issue of *News Briefs*. Outraged by this senseless act, the legislature was considering "Megan's Law" to get such violent abusers off the streets forever. Making Megan's cause of her own, Donna circulated petitions in her community, in support of Megan's Law.

Recently Stacie discovered an emporium selling tee-shirts crudely attacking gays. Terming such entrepreneurs "money-grubbing fools," she spoke boldly out in her chapter newsletter. Apparently these tasteless shirts have created a furor in exalted circles in New Jersey. Governor Christine Whitman (R-New Jersey) protested, "The message insults the gay community and is offensive to anyone who sees it. It is demeaning to individuals and is little more than an appeal to personal bias

and bigotry." Adding action to words, Governor Whitman dispatched a letter to the Chairman of General Mills suggesting that he look into a possible trademark infringement lawsuit against the peddlers of these tee-shirts. "The tee-shirts are so deeply offensive and potentially harmful that I felt I had to speak out publicly," said Governor Whitman. How right the Governor is! This type of mind-set, which spews venomous hate over innocent people, affects all of us, and it behooves all of us, like Stacie and Governor Whitman, to speak out and let it be known that this offensive behavior will not be tolerated.



Illinois

DATELINE: CHICAGO

The Couples' Group at Chi Chapter is undergoing expansion and a thorough redefinition of its vision. In her column, "Understanding Us", Susan B., Couples' Group Coordinator, describes the couples' meeting as "a unique time that people use to learn and grow, unlike the social time of the regular meeting. Couples come together to try to work out differences and learn what has worked for others as well." The Couples' Group will be self-facilitated. As part of its vision it will sponsor socials

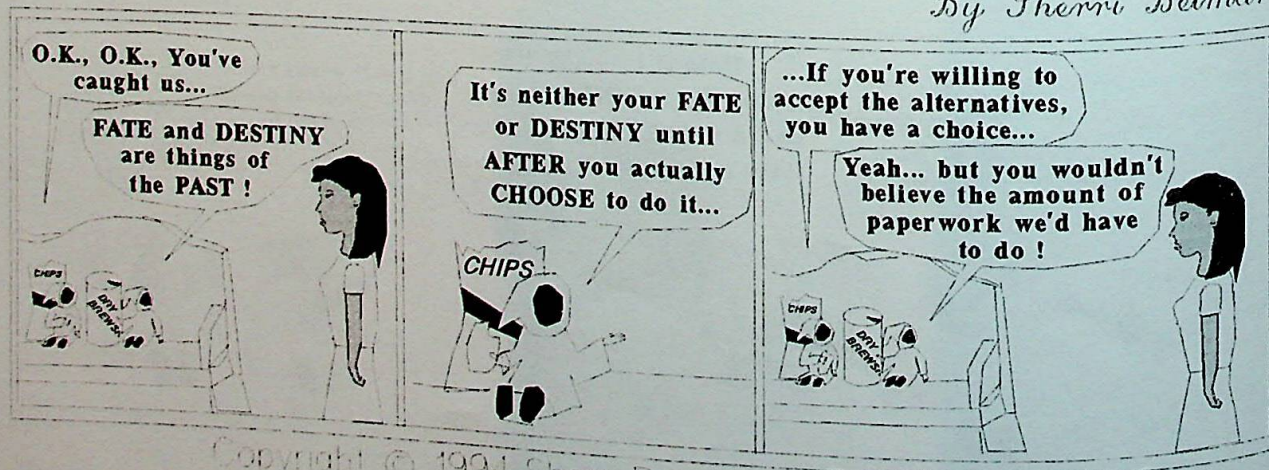
twice a year, to include either dinner or dinner and a show. Spinning off from the Couples' Group will eventually be a women's group. In its recent meeting, the couples' session focused on "pet peeves." Joy, facilitator of the session, gave all members the assignment of determining two pet peeves and working to modify them during the upcoming month. Supporting the re-vitalization was President Gloria Wright: "I really see this as one of the more important tasks we have as a support group... I applaud the work they are doing."

From Athena comes the wisdom that one's personality can be deduced by an examination of the lipstick in the tube. The control freak, for instance, boasts a lipstick shape that is unscathed, like new. Since controllers are very precise about everything, they are equally precise in the application of their lipstick. The lipstick of the executive, however, is flat across. Such high-powered professionals, busy and efficient, apply their lipstick straight across, pressing hard. In this way the point gets mushed down and the appearance becomes flat.

The Marilyn Monroe glamour queen type purses her lips and applies her lipstick quickly and forcefully; thus, her lipstick demonstrates a rounded shape. The busy mom, however, doesn't have time for all this. She pulls her lips tight and ONE! on the lower lip and TWO! on the upper lip, and she is finished. Such an application technique leaves her lipstick shape slightly angled.

CD

By Sherri Belmar



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More hair or less hair? That is the dilemma most of us face at one time or another. Those long, glamorous curls make us feel oh-so-feminine, but they are somehow inappropriate for a 50-year-old mature lady. What to do? Aunt Babs Babushka (AKA Naomi!) offers her own testimony: "I too like lots and lots of long, long hair and that is what I used to wear. I loved it! Now I wear a much shorter, fluffy hairdo which softens my face. Those who have known me for a long time have kindly told me that I look younger and prettier than I did 10 years ago. One has a choice, either look more feminine or feel more feminine. My own problem is resolved by seeing that my friends, in paying me these compliments, give me enough of a feminine boost to make up for not having that wonderful feel of a long, smooth pageboy swinging around when I turn my head (To tell the truth, I would still rather have that lustrous pageboy, but I bow to external opinions). Make your own choice. I did!"

When two of our most outstanding chapters come together, you can bet there will be a lot of sharing, and both organizations will be the better. At the July meeting of Chi Chapter Lauren Hester spoke and discussed the very effective Newcomers' Program at Sigma Epsilon. Now a similar newcomers' session has blossomed at Chi. DeeDee and Amanda are on hand at the regular meeting room to welcome newcomers and provide a chance to talk together about crossdressing, its challenges and concerns. For those who have been away for a while, the newcomers' session also is a good way to get back into touch.

Being discussed also are crossdresser ID's. If one is stopped by the police, one may avert a potentially awkward situation by having an alternate feminine identification. In this way the police officer can see that the person driving the car is identical with his "brother," whose picture appears on the driver's license. Such a card can also come in handy when cashing a check en femme.

The Mirror would like to express its condolences to Gloria on the death of one of her best friends, her cat Spirit, age 19. Spirit was Gloria's roommate before her marriage and had stayed with her as Gloria's family grew. The fact that Gloria was a crossdresser made no difference to Spirit. He was always someone in whom she could confide her deepest feelings and always seemed to understand. As Gloria eulogized, "Animals give their love and affection unconditionally. You don't have to have a certain color hair or look a certain way or have just the right religion, vocation or upbringing. You don't have to wear just the right kind of clothing. If you love and treat them well, they will be by your side forever." In some ways cats have the advantage of us humans.



New Mexico

DATELINE: ALBUQUERQUE

Kudos to "Editor by Default" CJ! When Marsha Michaels, editor of the Fiesta Newsletter, was hospitalized with an extended illness, CJ stepped forward and served. From out of the pages of the newsletter sparkled her delightful personality that radiated fun, femininity and fellowship. The graphics of the medical equipment as she related Marsha's hospital stay, and the two children with the walkie-talkie as she called for members to attend the August meeting, were darling! For Marsha she had a little proverb bouquet from China, "The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials." Then came, "Hang in there Marsha, perfection is on its way."

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Reflecting on related questions brought up at the meeting, CJ posed some interesting questions of her own. If society really didn't care what you wore...what would you wear? If no one read you and no one stared or snickered, because it was "normal" for a male to wear a dress...what would you wear? If your wife, relatives and friends really enjoyed going out with you dressed enfemme and encouraged you to do so...what would you wear?

In a deeper vein CJ asked why there were so many transsexual wanna-be's. Possible answers are the feelings of letdown when a crossdresser takes off her beautiful feminine clothes, peer pressure to go increasingly down the path toward reassignment, or the notion that to "grow" one needs to graduate from "just crossdressing."

One thing is certain. CJ did a wonderful job as interim editor and she injected her own unique flavor to the newsletter and to Fiesta Chapter. Best wishes from this columnist to Marsha who is fortunately recovered from her medical travails and is now back in the saddle as editor. May she enjoy good health and soon regain all her energy and strength.



New York

DATELINE: BUFFALO

Congratulations to the ladies of Nu Phi Chi on celebrating their second anniversary! On a wonderfully clear, cool day in August, the Buffalo Belles held a chapter picnic. Attendance was brisk, and there were a number of wives in attendance. Cathy, editor of the Buffalo Belles newsletter, posed the possibility of establishing a wives' group. Reminiscing on the struggle to establish the chapter, Joan C. recalled the sometimes lonely effort involved. To Joan the establishment of Nu Phi Chi has been a dream come true. This writer still recalls the outstanding newspaper article in which Joan reached

out to her community. Joan, however, gives Denise M. most of the credit. "You took this group from nothing and you made it into something. You accomplished what I couldn't do." Building upon efforts of Joan and Denise, the sisters of Nu Phi Chi can look back with pride of the 22 meetings they have held so far, and to the growth, good times and, most importantly, the sense of sisterhood that has replaced for so many the feelings of isolation. Congratulations, ladies, and best wishes for years and years of fulfillment and growth!



Utah

DATELINE: SALT LAKE CITY

The ladies of Alpha Rho have established a second meeting. Initially called the Interweave Cottage Group, it is now called T.O.M. ("the other meeting"?). This monthly meeting, which will be non-crossdressed, is open to Alpha Rho members and their spouses. Its goal is to create an informed environment for discussion among the men and women in the community. The enthusiasm of the new board members is obvious, and it is already telling in the signing up of new members.

Alpha Rho has a new P.O. Box and Voice Mail Number. Joann, a board member, is working on the possibility of enjoying a night on the town crossdressed, with or without spouses. She is contacting restaurants which would accept crossdressers as the ladies they are, and treat them accordingly. Programs are under discussion, and members are working to have crossdressing-related books stocked at popular bookstores. Also under discussion is compilation of a library.

The writer of the "In My Opinion" column in Alpha Rho's Dresseret News made an excellent point for maintaining relationships between crossdressers and their wives. "Relationships are very fragile things (or some may say they can be a bit SCREWY). In any relationship it takes

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two to make it work or not. I feel in my relationship I am screwing a screw into something. A lot can happen! Sometimes the screw goes in smoothly and I am excited! Or it can go in crooked and refuse to go in for some unseen reason. Instead of finding the problem, I curse the screw. Other times the screw will actually pull away from the wall and the damage is done. I then grab the nearest thing out of frustration and start pounding and make the situation hopeless. Each of us is a screwdriver and our partners are the screws. How do we treat them? Do we enjoy the situation, or curse them and, out of frustration, risk losing everything we have worked for? If you want the answer, look at the way those who are closest to you are acting. You can only change yourself."

Imagine this writer's thrill when reading the DVG newsletter out of California and finding a loving invitation from Janette C. for members of Diablo Valley Girls to attend Alpha Rho meetings! This is outreach and community building at its very best! With its many new programs, dynamic new leadership and inspired outreach, Alpha Rho Chapter is projecting an atmosphere of love. Tri-Ess membership in the state of Utah is already up 30% over last year and these fine workers have just begun! Please do keep up the excellent work, ladies!



North Carolina

DATELINE: CHARLOTTE

Peggy, Editor of the Pink Slip, has achieved a significant personal insight. She says she has found an inner peace because she has been able to combine the male and female into one person, herself. According to Peggy, "I don't feel I have to be completely dressed to feel feminine nor to demonstrate feminine feelings. On the other side, I can be assertive while in a skirt or dress. Despite the outer garments it's still me inside." Congratulations, Peggy, on your inner peace and your success in crossdressing your soul!

Reported in the Pink Slip are some new products. Bali is now marketing a "Beyond Beautiful" firm control waist nipper. Made of very light and comfortable sheer power net, flexible boning and non-stretch lace, it comes in white or black and a variety of sizes. Cost is \$21.00. Also, L'eggs is now making a silky trouser sock and silky tights. The trouser sock with the eyelet pattern looks more like a dressy sock than nylons and appears to endure well. The socks retail for about \$2.00, the tights, for \$5.00. Peggy reports that she has been able to wear the trouser socks with her suits and casual wear and no one has noticed.

Bad news on the hosiery front! From Kappa Beta Chapter by way of the Washington Post comes the headline that women appear to be foregoing pantyhose in favor of bare legs, pants or socks. Shipments of pantyhose to retail outlets have fallen by about 21% over the last five years. Sara Lee Corporation, which makes Hanes, L'eggs and DKNY pantyhose announced that it would cut 6% of the jobs in its personal products division, which includes hosiery. Perhaps women are feeling less of a need to don power suits and hose, and favor a more casual appearance. Summer heat, discomfort and lack of endurance may all have their part in the decline of pantyhose sales. Industry experts, however, believe that pantyhose are here to stay. Peggy, however, tongue in cheek, suggests that we crossdressers take no chances and stock up now while the stocking is good.



Georgia

**DATELINE:
ATLANTA**

The newcomers' group at Sigma Epsilon Chapter continues to be very successful. Plans have been implemented to include a guest speaker, a video or a presentation by a veteran Sigma Epsilon member. At a recent meeting a young couple attended and actively participated in the "Ask a Wife Discussion" which

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developed. Although the wife came to learn about crossdressers, the crossdressers themselves came away with an equal appreciation of a women's concerns.

One of the more heart-warming occasions was the get-together between members of Sigma Epsilon and AGE to help Linda Ashley celebrate her first anniversary of acknowledging her transgendered nature. Paulette Stevens, new editor of the Southern Belle, compares such an occasion very appropriately to a birthday. When various groups get together to celebrate such a joyous occasion, they come together in other ways and develop friendship and understanding. "For only through such understanding", argues Paulette, "can we ever learn to embrace others in the gender community who may be different from ourselves...only after we learn to love one another in our small community can we hope to foster a greater understanding and acceptance with society at large." Well said, Paulette!



Minnesota

**DATELINE:
MINNEAPOLIS**

On August 5th, Sofronia Anne attended the First Planning Conference on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Affairs at the University of Minnesota. This meeting was designed to create programs for the transgendered population. Since many transgendered people are deeply closeted and their needs are to a great extent unknown, the conference elicited a great deal of interest in the needs of transgendered people.

The committee has met again in September to finalize the 1994-1995 educational programs. Beta Gamma is looking forward to working with the University of Minnesota on debates, symposia and classes designed to assist various sectors of society to understand better the needs of crossgendered people. Sofronia, Tri-Ess, like you, feels very highly honored that you have been asked to consult

with such authorities as those at the University of Minnesota. You and the ladies of Beta Gamma have accomplished so much in a short time!

The ladies of Beta Gamma recently held a brainstorming session on a new Pledge Program, which will be a fun method to educate crossdressers in the various feminine arts. The goal is for crossdressers to learn how to enjoy the full potential of their second selves and enable wives and partners to learn how to participate, without fear, in developing our "girl within."

According to Sofronia every member of Beta Gamma Chapter and indeed Tri-Ess would be eligible for the Pledge Program. Once the program is finalized and approved we will disseminate it to the chapters. The program will not entail any requirement to participate, but will simply be a tool for feminine development. Under the Pledge Program, crossdressers will give themselves permission to develop their femininity to become healthier and happier as we affirm and develop our second selves. The nine steps involved in the program are:

1. Pledging
2. Protocols of appearance
3. Comportment
4. Domestic Skills
5. Voice Training
6. Modeling
7. Dancing
8. Socialization
9. Initiation

After the chapter group goes through the program an initiated big sister will assist newcomers. The advantage of the Pledge Program is that it would be helpful, life affirming and self-esteem enhancing. It sounds like it will be very educational and a lot of fun.





Arizona

DATELINE: TEMPE

For the last several months the ladies of Alpha Zeta have been hard at work on a public access presentation, Genderline, appearing on Channel 22 cable access television. The objects of this public access presentation is to inform and educate society at large about the gender community, to recruit new members and to search for gender-friendly merchants and employers in the Phoenix Valley area.

Many members of Alpha Zeta stepped forward to be filmed for the Channel 22 presentation. Suggestions for topics came from the membership itself. Rashel Richards, President of Alpha Zeta, expressed the hope the Genderline presentation would become a "boiler plate" for chapters in other cities to put on their cable access channels. IFGE has indicated an interest in the end product and may be making it available through Tapestry.

Genderline, which will run for 13 weeks, will include discussions on crossdressing, female impersonators, comments from psychologists and other topics suggested by the chapter membership. The first show, which aired Monday, September 19th at 5:00 PM, covered the topic of wives and partners. This project is of potentially momentous importance in Tri-Ess outreach nationwide. This writer would urge every Tri-Ess chapter leader who reads this, to write immediately to Rashel and inquire about adapting this project to community outreach in their own cities.

Alpha Zeta Chapter has also volunteered for a Stop AIDS Project called, "The House of Latex." Funded at a national level through the Center for Disease Control, the film would adapt the concept of the film, Paris is Burning. The grant money is targeted to change the behavior of persons seriously at risk of transmitting or receiving AIDS. The concept would be

to set up "houses" or groups of people who would compete against other "houses." This event, which would be put on by the gender community, would bring people together in a sisterhood and fellowship among people who feel left out of society. According to Rashel Richards, "This sense of belonging produces a higher self-esteem for the participants, thus producing new-found desires to be responsible for one's sexual behavior. The CDC Project provides an excellent opportunity for the gender community to work together with the gay community. Eradicating AIDS is a project in which we all should be most interested, and eager to participate.



Colorado

DATELINE: DENVER

Anndrea D. writes of the fun times one can have at various gender conventions. Describing these events as "Nirvana for the gender extender," Anndrea urges us to enjoy "five or even ten days as your femme self surrounded by like-minded souls in blissful disdain of whether you are read." Many of these get-togethers occur in some of the loveliest places in the country."

At these gender conventions one gets the opportunity to meet some of the movers and shakers in the gender community and attend workshops on all sorts of self-help subjects, ranging from family relationships to wig care. What with travel expenses and the purchase of that special dress or accessory, these events are not inexpensive. Anndrea, however, argues that, even if attending such an event requires some planning, scrimping and saving, having the time of your life at such an event is worth it.

Finally Anndrea proposed that Delta Chapter hostess an enfemme event. She cites groups from Florida to Texas to Iowa which put on similar events. Colorado has many gifts which would make a gender community event attractive. The beauty of the state is well-known. Hotel rates would likely be reasonable and the mountain



weather in the Fall would be cool. Although there would be a lot of work involved in staging such an event, the local chapter members would be able to have an event close to home in an area where there are seldom nearby gender events.

Delta Chapter had been selected to hostess the 1993 Holiday EnFemme, but the event was transferred because of the notorious Amendment II. Anndrea points out, however, that the Supreme Court seems unlikely to reinstate this oppressive measure. Given all these positives, Anndrea asks, "So why not us?"

Why not, indeed! Everything Anndrea cites in her article is true. The Holiday EnFemme is a wonderful opportunity for our chapters to showcase themselves for the gender community and for society at large. National leaders would be available to promote the chapter. Since Delta has not put on a Holiday EnFemme, it would likely receive very serious consideration from the Board of Directors. It is the goal of Tri-Ess to have the Holiday spoken for up to five years in advance so that the chapters can make their plans in an orderly fashion. If the rest of Delta Chapter feels as you do, Anndrea, this writer would strongly urge Delta to apply to the Board to hostess a Holiday EnFemme in 1997. Delta Chapter has the leaders and workers to get the job done. Why not go for it?





DATELINE: HOUSTON

On September 10th the gender-gifted people of Houston, Texas made giant strides towards forming a community. A unity banquet, the brainchild of Peggy Rudd, was a fantastic success! Held at Dante's Italian Restaurant, the banquet was attended by 58 people representing all the gender groups in Houston. Participants were treated to the melodious strains of the "Ballad of the Bobbitt Hillbillies" and "Honky Tonk Hermaphrodite," as played and sung by Jeanette Johnson. Speech-making was kept to a minimum. Jean T. of Tau Chi Chapter stressed the need for genuine love and mutual respect among all gender-gifted people.

Jackie Thorne of the Gulf Coast Transgender Community felt that the Houston community is blessed in a diversity that enables us, by the unique foci of the various groups, to help all facets of the transgendered community. To Jackie the key to solving problems in the gender community is communication. "We need to stress those things we have in common that unite us, and accept the diversity, rather than allow it to divide us." All expressed the hope that the unity banquet should be continued to help foster sisterhood and harmony. Now if we could find a way to expand this concept to the entire community worldwide!

Under Peggy Rudd, Tau Chi Chapter has experienced a renaissance. Outreach has been percolating since the chapter has published ads in newspapers. Peggy is keeping the hotline hot and referring many for screening interviews. Last month alone, this writer sent in five new memberships to Donna Martin. By placing Boys-R-U's on the day before the meeting, out-of-town members can come in and participate in a weekend of chapter life. Boys-R-U's has been experiencing some exciting times. Recently the members went to a roller skating rink. Another month there was an
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evening out at a restaurant that also featured a casino. Ever innovative, Tau Chi has streamlined its dues collection process so that the members pay both local and national dues once a year. Rather than a masculine-type hierarchy, Tau Chi is governed by a feminine supportive web with the Facilitator at its center. The Board of Directors simply consists of those who have volunteered for certain jobs. This makes for a very supportive, communicative, cooperative organization - the acme of femininity.



Florida

DATELINE: WINTER PARK

Phi Epsilon Mu has made another one of its many contributions to Tri-Ess. Our Florida sisters have compiled outstanding information packets for inquirers and for new members. So excellent and thorough were they, that this writer sent a copy to all chapters. Possibly they can be adapted for use by other chapters.

This seems to be the quarter for chapter birthdays! Phi Epsilon Mu is now beginning its eighth year. As a flashback, the editor of FEM included a page from Volume I, Number 1 of Phi Epsilon Mu's newsletter. One headline crows, "We are growing! Did you know that we now average attendance in the 20 to 25 range?" When Denise joined Tri-Ess, only one sister from her area appeared in the Directory. Now the Directory is full of Tri-Ess sisters from the central Florida area. Five Phi Epsilon Mu members are now living in the same apartment complex! How times have changed!

There is a sister at Phi Epsilon Mu this writer fondly hopes someday to meet. Her name is Darcy and she is wife of one of the Phi Epsilon Mu sisters. In the July issue of FEM, Darcy wrote a most moving letter describing her fear of the unknown as she was about to attend her first meeting. That she conquered it, was due not only to her obvious strength of character, but also to the love and support shown at the chapter. Her husband, Bobbie, had explained to her

in loving detail the course the evening would probably take. According to Darcy, "He was right. The evening went just as he told me it would, only better."

"Crossdressing was explained and shown to me in ways I could understand. I was brought to see that my husband's feminine side is not a threat to me and is actually a healthy expression of his "inner self." Darcy's message to other fearful wives: "You are not alone." Promises Darcy, "When you decide to join us at a monthly meeting, I'll be there. I'll be the one glowing with happiness and a huge smile." You are not the only one, Darcy. I am sure your loving spirit has brought a deep inward smile to your husband. Besides, people like you tend to spread sunshine and smiles into the lives of others. Your letter made my day!



Georgia

DATELINE: ATLANTA

Sixteen Sigma Epsilon sisters were on hand for Friday night's enfemme dining out at a new stop, Cowtipper's Steak House.

Since the chapter's meeting hotel overlooks a major shopping mall, two SigEps again went aerobic-walking inside it with the other exercise buffs who take advantage of the mall's early opening and air conditioning for that purpose. The hotel's breakfast buffet was our social scene until late morning meetings of wives, newcomers, and T group, or just shopping trips, drew members in several directions.

The afternoon general members' meeting discussed, among other things, the hotel's opinion of our group. Feedback through a permanent resident who usually joins our Safari Lounge partying, and who discussed the matter with two top managers, says we are liked and are just behind some large corporate accounts as the hotel's best customers. Why not? As one wife keeps saying, we behave better than the

average church group, come every month, and spend/tip more freely. Our dinner buffet in the hotel's Georgian Room and presence in the Safari Lounge until 2am, then again at Sunday brunch, demonstrated that fact. Two curious wedding party groups and a graduation party questioned some of our "ladies" and then socialized pleasantly with us in the lounge. This time the bride posed our 'ladies' for photos with the men of her group. Several months ago it was the bride of another party who posed with us. Outreach can be fun!



Florida

DATELINE: TALLAHASSEE

Jackie & Betty once again hosted the bi-monthly meeting of Tau Lambda chapter in June. Members came from lower Alabama and from Florida Panhandle places like Pensacola and Ft. Walton, plus local areas, for 'sorority' socializing. Ham and chicken based casseroles, together with saucy crock pot mini-franks were the entrees for a bodacious buffet dinner.

Since summer travels kept attendance on the light side, little business was discussed. Planning for an October Halloween event was postponed until the August 27 gathering. Searching out a CD-friendly public meeting location, suitable for enfemme arrivals and departures to area malls, clubs and restaurants, was again discussed. Inquiries will be initiated.

Michelle, our chapter's own certified Mary Kay CD gal, gave a very comprehensive and professional lecture-demo of makeup products, color coordination and application techniques before slipping into a beautifully beaded, figure flattering little size 10 \$285 creation bought at a major department store super sale for \$35!

Evening's end found the several wives and many of our CD sisters enjoying a video re-run of Mrs. Doubtfire.



Announcing:

New Outreach Opportunity! The release this fall of such movies as Just Like A Woman and Ed Wood provides Tri-Ess with a great new outreach opportunity. At the suggestion of Lisa Jayne (CA-3889-K), Tri-Ess has produced a new triple-fold information pamphlet that is perfect for placing in the lobbies of theaters playing these movies. Batches of these new brochures and templates for reproducing more have been sent out to all Tri-Ess chapters, and are available for the asking from Carol Beecroft's and Jane Ellen Fairfax's offices. Ladies, let's do our part to educate the public and reach our closeted sisters!

New Membership Directory! Deanna Johns, Coordinator of the Membership Directory, informs us that the 1994 Directory is at the printer's and will be out shortly. This will be the best yet, sisters, and future updates should be quick and easy with our new loose-leaf format. Look for it in your mailboxes soon!

New Gender Issues BBS! A Houston-area BBS called A Little Corner In Time, is in the process of setting up a new Crossdressing echo that will be available nation-wide via FIDOnet! Anyone wanting more information about this can contact Brenda at her InterNet address: Brenda.Thomas@PSL-online.com or you may NetMail her at 1:106/113. Brenda will be the national moderator of this new system!

Holiday En Femme 1994 will take place in the Big Apple November 9-13. It's not too late to come, sisters! See the ad elsewhere in this issue.

The Third Annual Spouse/ Partner International Conference of Education - S.P.I.C.E. 95 - will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, Wednesday, July 26, through Sunday, July 30, 1995. See the ad elsewhere in this issue and the S.P.I.C.E. Special Feature, and start planning NOW to attend!

Sisters Across The Sea Make Contact! The first match of sister groups under Tri-Ess' new Sisters Across the Sea Program has been made. Alpha Zeta Chapter of Arizona and FPE-Norway will now become linked in a special sisterhood. Both groups will be free to develop their special sisterhood in a way that suits them best. They will exchange publications and establish friendships between their leaders. Perhaps members will write for each other's newsletters. Both groups will get a chance to learn more about the nature of crossdressing in other lands and gain insight also into different cultures and folkways. For all willing sister groups, Tri-Ess National will exchange its publications and ideas. Congratulations to FPE and Alpha Zeta for pioneering in this unique experiment in worldwide sisterhood!

New Outreach Opportunity Via Public Access Television! Alpha Zeta Chapter members have been working hard to produce a 13-week Genderline series for Channel 22, the Phoenix area Public Access TV Channel.

Rashel Richards, President of Alpha Zeta, expressed the hope the Genderline presentation would become a "boiler plate" for chapters in other cities to put on their cable access channels. IFGE has indicated an interest in the end product and may be making it available through Tapestry.

This project is of potentially momentous importance in Tri-Ess outreach nationwide. This writer would urge every Tri-Ess chapter leader who reads this, to write immediately to Rashel and inquire about adapting this project to community outreach in their own cities.

What Do Women Want? What Do Crossdressers Want? And Where Do We Go From Here?

by Virginia Prince

"What do women want?" was Freud's famous question, but it was an expression of bafflement on an individual basis. I use it here to ask it collectively of the whole sex. There is, of course, the conflict between those in the liberation movement who urge women to seek their full potential in jobs, careers and accomplishment. And, there are also those who favor the more biological approach of wifehood, motherhood, and home making. Both serve good ends and should not necessarily be mutually exclusive, but the demands of each are such that in practice a choice must be made between them.

"...men ... become not so much the enemy as the competition...role models..."

However, in the first group something is going on that is perfectly visible, but not necessarily apparent. This is the fact that women, in moving out into the world, getting degrees in law, medicine, business administration and other professions, have seen men as having all the power and opportunity in society. Men therefore become not so much the enemy as the competition. Since men have been in that position for centuries and have more or less controlled much of women's lives during that time, it is natural that women seeking to make something of themselves would look to the men as role models and those from whom the women could learn.

"...Aesop fable..."

Unfortunately, so many women, or possibly the whole liberation movement as a group, remind me of the old Aesop fable about the dog and the bone. You may remember the dog who, wandering around one day, found a nice bone. He picked it up in his mouth and started to trot home with it. On the way he had to cross a bridge over a small pond. Stopping to look down, he saw his reflection, but to him it seemed to be another dog who also had a bone. He



opened his mouth to bark at the other dog and in so doing dropped the bone he already had into the water and lost it.

Women had a monopoly on many aspects of human existence. It was called "femininity" and was in contrast to masculinity. It represented about half of the total of human potentials, and it was presumed to be the prerogative of females. But women who had the "bone" of femininity saw, as the "other dog," the men who had the "bone" of power, prestige and position which they wanted for themselves.

"...women...have tended to adopt masculine ways..."

Instead of keeping the bone they already had—femininity—and going after opportunities, freedoms and privileges that men had long had but denied to women, they have tended to adopt masculine ways—the other dog's bone—and thus have, to a considerable degree, lost the one they had—true femininity.

Women now wear masculine type clothes, mostly jeans or other pants, not as occasional casual clothes but as a regular daily uniform. They have adopted boots, canvas athletic shoes (which are almost always dirty) or more recently thick soled, high top, heavy masculine shoes of the

type I was so glad to grow out of as a boy when I got into oxfords. Tops are now generally T shirts or regular shirts, often with regular men's ties. In behavior they act like men, swear like men, drink like men and use male gestures and vocal commentaries of a sexual or scatological nature, just like the men.

Feminists have long complained that "men see us only as sex objects." Yet with a great many women you see on the street today, what is left to appeal to the men, except their femaleness? Their clothes could as easily be worn by a man, they use little or no makeup, their hair is frequently in a very mannish style and in careless disarray. In fact, you frequently can't tell a young man from a young woman unless you can hear her speak or catch a lateral view of her chest and see the bulge of her breasts.

"The world...needs...femininity."

One is inclined to point out semiafacetiously, that if things go on like they have for the last 20 years, we will end up sometime in the future with a society entirely composed of men (gender word) but half of them will be female (anatomical word). The world certainly has all the driving, aggressive, "machoness" it needs. These characteristics have brought the world to the position it is in, namely, wars, violence, terrorism, hostages, gangs, drugs, etc. Although there are some females involved in these activities they are very largely expressions of the masculine ego—feeding greed and self aggrandizement. The world does NOT need the females contributing to those same destructive behaviors. On the other hand, the world in the sense of human society and the earth in the sense of our planet, does need a great deal more love, caring, tenderness, consolation, help, concern, etc. - the very characteristics that comprise femininity.

If women want to take their place and make their mark in the more influential spots in society let them do it in feminine ways in order to tame and modify the destructive aspects of the male drive to dominate, exploit, subjugate, and control people and things. In short, improve on them, don't just imitate them. Women mayors, governors, heads of state, etc. ought to do their jobs using feminine values, not just be men in skirts (if indeed they wear them).

"...the visible aspects of femininity ...are ...more manifest in the crossdressing community than...among today's women."

So what does this have to do with crossdressing? Simply that it is coming to the point where the visible aspects of femininity, physical appearance, and loving, caring behavior are often more manifest in the crossdressing community than they are among today's women. This shouldn't come as a surprise, because there are many fewer crossdressers today under the age of 30 than there were when you and I were young. This is significant because a man's ideas about women, what he appreciates, physically, socially and psychologically are formed when he is between 15 and 20 years old. So those who are 40 or more today formed their ideas about women 20 to 25 years ago (1970-75), when women manifested more of what we still enjoy as femininity. I am using the word not only to refer to their appearance but their behavior, what we as young men found different, beautiful and appealing about them. It

makes me wonder if perhaps the drive to crossdress will itself become much rarer in the future. Can you see a young man of today being fascinated enough with the visible picture of the girls in school or on the street to want to imitate and be like them? The only time her clothes are markedly different from his are when she goes to some special evening event and wears a cocktail dress or a formal.

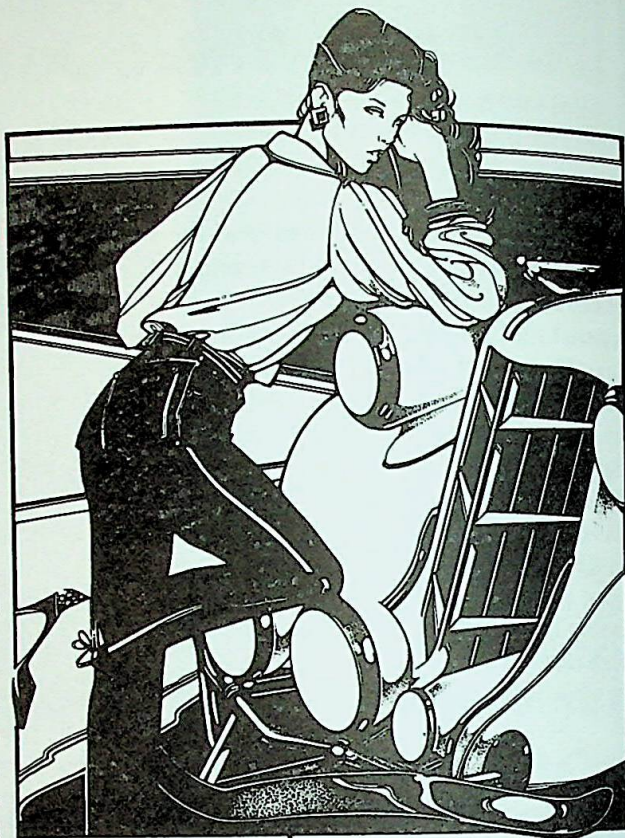
So now to address my title question, "What Do Crossdressers Want?" I think what we want is essentially what women want, namely to escape from the stereotypic requirements and limitations existing at our respective ends of the gender scale. And since there is no direction to go from the end except toward the other end, both men and women are moving away, to one degree or another, from their respective ends and toward the other. Actually they will meet somewhere in the middle, which will be an androgynous condition. (I prefer to arrange the two Latin roots in the opposite order namely gynandrous. Both words mean the same but I prefer the honor of primacy for the feminine term.)

"...the death of gender."

In either case the general term "gender" refers to the fact that there are two ends to the scale bearing the names of masculinity and femininity. Now if the occupants of each end start migrating towards each other they not only meet somewhere, but each has abandoned his or her original location. Thus the term "gender" for those ends ceases to have much meaning anymore. This then is the death of gender. Sexual anatomy again is the only important difference as it is in animals, and copulation and reproduction are the only significant

manifestations of that difference. Other than that, may the best person win.

The above is a long term picture of the apparent direction of development, and crossdressers are not really concerned about it. Crossdressers want to maintain their concept of femininity as seen through their 15 to 20 year old eyes. Their concept of femininity comes from a time when girls were girls, a time when they were envious not only of girls' clothing but of their attractiveness and drawing power, if you could call it that. Girls got attention and interest just by being girls, while the boys had to DO something to get attention, admiration, and ego strokes. By crossdressing in those girl's clothes they close that admiration/attention gap and thus relieve that lifelong envy. Crossdressers when dressed have moved a long way down the scale in the feminine direction just as modern American women have moved a long way from the feminine end in a masculine direction. If they are both smart they will hold on to what they already have while trying to get and enjoy some of the freedoms and privileges of the other end.



The Gender Shift

By D. McKay (P A-3722-M)

In the past year, at age 41, my 37 years of denial and guilt finally came to an end. I finally accepted myself for the person I really am, and accepted that this is the way God had intended to make me in this world. I then wanted to educate myself as much as I could on this extra quality God had thrown into my makeup.

I attended the IFGE convention in Philadelphia last year, plus other seminars, and psychologist and psychiatrist meetings. I read books, Tapestry and Femme Mirror articles, and other information. I've met lots of crossdressers and transsexuals here in Pennsylvania, and in Ohio, New York and Canada. I felt I had a good enough handle on the phenomenon to at least try to explain the basics to the general public.

All this has not been without a price, however. It has cost me my marriage, but through counseling, I've found that the stability needed for a good marriage to survive was never there from the start. So my crossdressing was really just the straw that broke the camel's back.

My divorce has given me more time to devote to my refinement of the art of passing, and I've actually had rather good success doing full weekends out a couple times a month. My height and hands are my only giveaway, but still only to those who are looking for it. The mindset and everything else are in place. So my "out" experience also gives me some qualification.

There are two points I would like to make in this article, but they both boil down to social acceptance.

As heterosexual males, we make up the great majority of the gender community, and we all share the same familiar story. We don't know why we are like this. We do, however, know what we enjoy about it. I personally would rather look like a woman. That's why I pursue it. It isn't that I despise being a man. It's very unfortunate that I am not able to look and dress as I truly would prefer to, which just happens to be exactly the same way women dress and look.

Society says they can, because of their physical construction, but I cannot because of mine. If a woman wants to dress like a man, with a male type haircut, and work and talk like a man, thus being a "half man", society says that's perfectly OK. Women are permitted to change their look and hair style and clothes to whatever style they choose. That's OK, too. We as men are only allowed to go so far with our look - as long as it remains a masculine type. As a man, I cannot go out in public as a "half woman" because society won't accept that. So we crossdressers must go the farthest extreme of not only look, but movement, mannerisms, speech and total feminine "mindset" to try our best to PASS, if we are to be accepted in public. Anything less would be degrading.

To "pass" as such, to be able to set free or create that second self within, gives us great satisfaction. And, if one is good enough at it, one can easily knock years off one's appearance. We are still male in this endeavor we are pursuing, but I know in my own experience, that a softer, more understanding and yielding type person is being exposed. We are still male - only different. In many cases, the aspect of continuing along the gender scale to the point of living as a woman either would be too confusing for other people in our social realm, or we simply do not have that much overwhelming feminine association within us to want to progress. So a temporary escape with our second self is enough for us to enjoy occasionally.

Since there are only pockets of individuals who give presentations and interviews on the subject, my area of central Pennsylvania is actually starved. So I've started contacting universities and have given presentations on crossdressing, including some of my own observations.

Since my marriage broke up, I've been meeting new women who also have been through years of failed marriages. And, I have come to an alarming conclusion. Even as my femme self, I've been in women's conversations which have affirmed this idea. I'm not sure if it can be



blamed on any particular movement, or just on life's pressures, but the women are not only dressing more and more like men, they are being more and more "masculinized" by society. In the last 20 years, women's rights have demanded that they be integrated into traditionally male jobs and positions. In fact, most female students who are in college are there to qualify for jobs which were once male dominated and in which they will have to compete with males.

So they must put aside their femininity in order to be more assertive, more demanding and more aggressive than they may normally have been. They now become more involved with the male "struggle to the top," and must compete as males in the male field. It is not that I am against women receiving equal status and pay for equal performance. Rather, my concern is that this slow hardening which has occurred in the past couple of decades, has been equaled by the simultaneous climb in divorce rates. When divorce occurs, something I've definitely noticed is an even further hardening of the woman, because of her now single-handed efforts in running family affairs. It would be very hard for a lasting relationship to endure with two competing male views. Either one or the other or both must show some feminine characteristics for a union to survive.

So is it truly that bad for a crossdresser to show more femininity? To look at it realistically, which is the greater concern to society: the slow masculinization of a good portion of women in society today, or a minority of males who have that bit of feminine within them they choose to express?

It is my hope that our culture can withstand the shift in gender roles, and reach an understanding that our existence as crossdressers represents a movement toward a common ground with women.

There everyone should recognize a non-biased equality of status we should all share, regardless of our physical construction.



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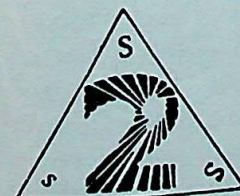
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Blowing The Doors Off The Closet

by Sharon Ann Stuart
and Thomas R. Heitz

Note: The following talk was delivered to the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP) annual meeting in Houston, Texas, on Saturday, August 20, 1994. It has been edited by the author for publication in the Femme Mirror.

This is not a "Coming Out Story" that I am about to tell you. This is instead - a coming out - my coming out. I am not coming out of the closet in the same way that others like Phyllis Frye and Laura Skaer have come out. I am not coming out as Michael Hernandez or Leslie Feinberg have come out. These friends are my role models in a sense, but I have long ago realized that I am different from them. Because I am different, my path out of the closet will be different, but it will be no less a liberation.

Tonight, with your help and support, I hope to blow the doors off of my closet and begin enlarging it. Eventually, my closet needs to be a mansion, a mansion with many rooms, a mansion large enough to accomodate whomever comes to visit me with good will, peace and love in their hearts.

To those who cannot accept me for what and who I am; to those who presume to judge me as sinful, depraved or mentally disordered; to those who would abridge my Human Rights; to those who would ridicule and belittle, please go away. I pray that you too will listen and change your ways, but until you do so, you are not welcome here.

It is no easy matter to stand before an audience and talk so openly about one's life. One feels vulnerable and alone. When the closet doors are open wide, in a sense you are naked before the eyes of the world, left without the customary defenses. Please forgive the immodesty as I try to tell you who I really am.

My name is Thomas R. Heitz. I am a lawyer. I am a librarian. I am of German/Welsh ancestry.

I am an elder in the Presbyterian church, the clerk of the Session, my congregation's governing board. I am Chair of a church task force which is providing for the needs of a Croatian man, a refugee from Bosnia, a victim of Gracini concentration camp.

I am a public trustee for two men, who cannot manage their own affairs. I am Chair of Otsego County's Conditional Release Commission, essentially a local parole board.

I am the founder and President of Leatherstocking Base Ball Club, a group of fifty volunteers, who for the past ten years have demonstrated how baseball was played in the mid-nineteenth century to audiences around New England.

I do play-by-play calls for the local high school basketball team, the Cooperstown Redskins, and serve as a field announcer for American Legion baseball, two duties that make use of this deep, masculine voice God has blessed me with.

For the past four years I have been a consultant to Ken Burns, the documentary film maker who 18-hour program entitled "Baseball" will air on PBS on September 18, 1994.

I am a local contact for Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), a support group for the parents, relatives and friends of homosexual men and women.

As a youth I played the violin. In the 1950's, in Kansas City, playing an instrument such as the violin characterized you as a "queer." I was subjected to some of this abuse and came eventually to understand the meaning of the words queer, homosexual, fag, and so on.

When I was a teenager attending a youth fellowship in my church one Sunday evening, a clergyman talked with us about those people who "sinned" by engaging in love for a member of their own sex. There was another boy in the group that evening, a boy I knew only slightly, a boy whose name I'm ashamed to say I no longer recall.

Several months later, he committed suicide. It was whispered around that he was "queer." Hearing that, I had a momentary impulse to end my own life, knowing that I too was different. For a time I assumed that I must be a homosexual, but as it turned out I was not.

I am happy to have lived a heterosexual existence, but there have been times when I wished that I were gay. There were times when I thought perhaps it would have been easier and less painful that way. Isn't the grass always greener on the other side of a fence?

I write a weekly history column for the Freeman's Journal, of Cooperstown, New York, the oldest continuously published weekly newspaper in the United States. I edit a weekly newsletter for the Cooperstown Rotary Club, which is part of an international service organization devoted to many worthy causes.

I am presently 53 years old. I have been married for thirty of those years to a wonderful woman. We have three daughters and now a granddaughter. I love my family very much. I regret they are not here to share this time with me.

I was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1940. Apart from a year in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where my father was earning a Master's Degree in Law, I spent my early life in Kansas City. I attended Border Star Elementary School and Southwest High School in Kansas City. I graduated from the University of Kansas with majors in Humanities and Philosophy in 1962.

In the summer of 1959 I participated as a member of the NAACP in civil rights demonstrations and sit-ins in Kansas City, Missouri, the object of which was to open public restaurants to members of the black community. We were successful to a degree. I was just eighteen years old at the time.

I graduated from the University of Missouri at Kansas City School of Law in 1965 with a Juris Doctorate at the age of twenty-four.

I worked briefly for the American Bar Association in 1965 before enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1966. In the Marine Corps I became a Judge Advocate, a Military Judge, and eventually a member of the faculty at the U.S. Naval Justice School. While teaching Administrative Law at Naval Justice School, the case of a Naval Officer Candidate was referred to me by a chaplain. Recently graduated from MIT as a mathematics major, and having enlisted in the Navy, this young man had made the mistake of revealing on a security clearance questionnaire that he had once been molested at the age of seven by a male relative who was then twelve years old. Although he was engaged to be married, and was plainly heterosexual, the Navy in its paranoia discharged him as a security risk on the grounds that he had admitted homosexual tendencies. I was powerless to help him and could only recommend that he resort to Federal District Court, a remedy he could not afford. He left the Navy in disgrace. I began to understand then that justice in this country, in this culture, often comes at a price, in terms of money, sacrifice and suffering.

Following discharge from active duty in 1972, I served as Commanding Officer of a Marine Corps Reserve unit in Tacoma, Washington. At that same time I was a member of the faculty of the University of Puget Sound School of Law and an assistant law librarian. Also during that period from 1972 to 1973 I attended classes at the University of Washington where I earned a Master's Degree in law librarianship. I studied under the great Marian Gallagher, who in many ways was my mentor and second mother. Marian was a wonderful caring person who had that rare ability to discern the good in others. She helped me find the good in myself, and taught me how to give it back to others.

In 1974 I migrated to British Columbia, Canada, with my family to work as the Law Librarian for the Law Society of British Columbia. In 1980 I returned to the United States to become the Chief of Library Services for Bob Abrams, who was then the Attorney General of New York.

Three years later in 1983, I left law librarianship to accept a position as Librarian for the National Baseball Library and Archive, a department of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York. I have remained in that position for the past twelve years.

At the national Baseball Library and Archive I have a wonderful and entertaining job, a new eight million dollar library facility in which to work, a supportive and competent staff to work with, and a life that outwardly, to many of my friends and professional associates, seems to be an ideal one.

I am grateful for the opportunities I have enjoyed professionally, and I look forward to the remainder of my career as a librarian.

Such is the personal and professional career of Thomas R. Heitz. However, I have another resume.

I have two resumes because I am a bi-gendered person. I am known more familiarly to most of you as Sharon Ann Stuart, which is the name of my feminine persona.

For those reading this in our Proceedings, or viewing a videotape, who may not understand my use of the term "bi-gendered," let me quickly say that being bi-gendered is to be capable of expressing both a masculine and a feminine gender identity alternatively with more or less equal facility and personal comfort.

Writer Dana Cole uses the term "ambi-gendered" which also applies to me. For broader political purposes, and in the gender community at large, I am content with the umbrella term "transgendered."

As I told writer Richard Levine in an interview for an article which appeared earlier this year in the magazine *Mother Jones*, the ideal world for me would be one in which I could choose my gender identity

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for the occasion, presenting as a woman on some days and as a man on others.

Clearly my ideal world is considerably at variance with present cultural mores and standards. I pray that this society will someday awaken to the strength, beauty and wisdom of those who possess within themselves the capacity to express multiple gender identities and roles as we bi-gendered people do.

At the risk of oversimplification, the difference between myself and Phyllis Frye, who is a non-operative transgendered person, and Laura Skaer, who is a post-operative transsexual person, is that unlike these two fine people, I move from one gender identity to the other routinely and back again.

Being bi-gendered is not unlike being bilingual; that is, speaking two languages. For example, if English is my native language, I might later learn to speak French. The likelihood is that I will speak French with an English accent. I might go to live in France, though, and learn to speak French very well, but I would never completely lose the ability to speak English, and I might never completely lose that accent.

If masculine is my native gender identity and my feminine identity is a second language, so to speak, my feminine persona is likely to have a masculine accent. However, if I choose to live as a woman full time and have surgery, my presentation will improve immensely, and I will lose some of that accent, but I won't be able to erase the masculine gender imprint totally. It is there, in my brain, no matter what. So is the feminine imprint.

I think of people like Laura Skaer and Phyllis Frye, metaphorically speaking, as having moved to France permanently. As a bi-gendered person, I think of myself as visiting France from time to time. Sometimes I just go to Montreal for the weekend, so to speak.

For me gender expression is very much like language. But, this topic must await another opportunity. I have digressed for the sake of those who are not intimately acquainted with our community and its plethora of terminology and human diversity.

I have come here tonight in my masculine persona as Thomas R. Heitz for several reasons, all of them selfish. Coming out is ultimately a selfish act, but a necessary and proper act for anyone who has reached the point where the pain of confinement to a closet outweighs the risks and consequences of liberation.

First, I am proud of who I am. I have nothing to apologize for, and no one to apologize to. Regardless of which wardrobe I happen to be wearing, I am equally comfortable. I have equal dignity and self esteem whether I present myself as Tom or as Sharon Ann.

Secondly, circumstances at gender community events dictate that Sharon Ann be present most of the time. Not tonight, however. This is Tom's night to meet all of you, and Tom's night to get to know you, and be known by you as Tom. Tom has lived in this closet as much as Sharon Ann.

Thirdly, I am tired of hiding a double identity. This is the night I have chosen to blow the doors off the closet.

Fourthly, Tom has a deeper voice and much more public speaking experience than Sharon Ann.

Sharon Ann's resume is shorter, thankfully, but I am no less proud of my activities and accomplishments as Sharon Ann. Sharon Ann has "been me" since infancy. Note how I phrased that. Not "with me" or "part of me," but "me." Sharon Ann has "been me" since infancy.

I first experienced crossdressing and crossgender behavior at a very early age, and I have never stopped doing so. I expect that I will be bi-gendered the day that I pass from this worldly existence. If it can possibly be arranged, both of my names are going on that tombstone.

I crossdressed publicly, though secretly, on many occasions as a teenager, as a college student, as a law student, and while serving on active duty with the U.S. Marine Corps. I met the legendary Virginia Prince in Los Angeles in 1968 and thus began by life in the so-called Gender Community as Sharon Ann Stuart. Sharon Ann was a member of Tri-Ess and attended the first social gathering of significant size and diversity, the Dream Program of 1973,

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held at Lincoln City, Oregon. In many respects the 1973 Dream event was the Gender Community's "Coming Out."

Sharon Ann attended four subsequent Dream gatherings. I got involved in helping my good friend, Marilyn Irving, to organize and manage the Dream events. Earlier this year the Dream girls celebrated our twentieth anniversary in Portland, Oregon, in an evening filled with tears and laughter. So many of us who attended those pioneer events have found liberation in the intervening years.

In 1978, Sharon Ann's existence was revealed to key members of the legal profession in British Columbia, resulting in Tom's dismissal as Law Librarian for the British Columbia Law Library Foundation. After a year of unemployment and economic disaster, Tom found the position in New York with Bob Abrams and resurrected his professional career.

However, during the summer and fall of 1979, Sharon Ann lived in the Vancouver, B.C., area full-time as a woman and explored the possibility of becoming a male to female transsexual. Eventually Sharon Ann rejected this option and returned to a bi-gendered role, sharing her time once again with Tom.

Sharon Ann spent much of the 1980's in the closet, perhaps being punished for causing Tom so much grief and trouble. Eventually Sharon Ann emerged to rejoin the Gender Community and did so by attending the Texas "T" Party in 1989.

Since 1989 Sharon Ann has been heavily involved in several gender community organizations. In 1992, she helped to found an upstate New York chapter of Tri-Ess known as Lambda Chi Lambda. Sharon Ann became an active member of IFGE and was elected to that organization's Board of Directors in 1993. She now serves as Vice-Chair of IFGE and Chair of its Legal & By-Laws Committee.

In 1992, Sharon Ann was recruited by Phyllis Frye to help establish ICTLEP, and was appointed by Phyllis to ICTLEP's Board of Directors. Sharon Ann serves ICTLEP as Director of the Military Law Project and as Director of the International Bill of Gender Rights Project.

The International Bill of Gender Rights, I believe, is a powerful document, one that has transformative potential, a document that will speak for us and about us not just tonight, but a hundred years hence.

Such is Sharon Ann's personal and professional resume. If you have yet to meet Sharon Ann, please let me know. I will arrange for her to meet you. To all those who read this in the Proceedings, or watch the videotape, I extend the same invitation, provided you come to me with peace and love in your hearts. My address is Thomas R. Heitz/ Sharon Ann Stuart, P.O. Box 1010, Cooperstown, NY 13326. My telephone number is (607) 547-4118.

In April, 1993, Sharon Ann participated in the March On Washington. In June of 1994, Tom marched with Phyllis at Stonewall 25 in New York City. There at Stonewall 25, during the march, six or seven blocks past the United Nations, at 3:00 PM came one of those moments in life which is a turning point, an emotional watershed, a defining moment as some would say. A minute of silence was to be observed precisely at 3:00 PM in memory of those who have fallen victim to HIV/ AIDS, and to honor all those who have passed before us in the great struggle for liberation.

I doubted that it could be done, that they could pull it off, that anyone would notice when the time came, given the absolute bedlam in the streets, and the tens of thousands of people engaged in the march. I confided my doubts to Phyllis, who was marching beside me. Thomas, after all, is my name - doubting Thomas.

But, when the time came, the marchers stopped in place, and the streets fell silent, block by block. In our block, a frightened dog barked for a few moments until it was muzzled by its owner. Then the world was perfectly still. Our heads were bowed. There was no sound to be heard in that great city, amidst that sea of humanity.

When the minute expired we heard the noise begin again miles away on the Great Lawn of New York City's Central Park. That triumphant noise, heard faintly in the distance at first, came rolling back through the canyon-like streets of Manhattan like thunder. Eventually the triumph reached us and engulfed us.

We gender people are like that - waiting for the liberation, for the triumph to reach us. I want to say to all of you, there will come a time when we will be called to the streets to show ourselves, to assemble, to protest, perhaps to be arrested for our beliefs and the cause of human rights and freedom. I hope that all of you will answer that call when it comes. Do not shrink from activism. There is a time and place for quiet struggle, and there is a time for public protest.

In that minute of silence I felt connected to humanity in some vital way that I have never before experienced. I felt my own unity, and I felt the unity of those with me. It was an empowering minute. When it was over I shared a hug with Phyllis and on we marched.

I am Thomas R. Heitz. I am Sharon Ann Stuart.

It may sound as though I am talking about two people. I am not two people. I am one person, one individual. My personality is not split. I am a unique unity. There are many two's in nature - eyes, ears, hands, limbs, kidneys, lungs and so on. I happen to have two well-established gender roles and identities. I am not alone. There are many of you who are like me, yet I am unique in my own way, in my own space, in my own time.

I am Thomas R. Heitz. I am Sharon Ann Stuart. But, I am a human being, a child of God. Such is the nature of the bi-gendered condition.

Tom has lost one job because of Sharon Ann. Could it happen again? Am I at risk of being dismissed from my current position by making myself known in this way, before a television camera, and in print form as part of the published proceedings of this conference? Perhaps. I really do not know the answer to that question. Only time will tell.

My employers hired me as Tom and it is Tom who goes to work. I have no plans or intentions of transitioning on the job. I have no plans to introduce Sharon Ann to my employers. But I recognize the distinct possibility of their learning about me from other sources. It is a risk I am prepared to take whatever the consequences may be. The people I work for and with are good people. I respect them and trust them. I

expect that they will respect and trust me, if my bi-gendered status becomes known. But, I have no immediate plans to tell them about myself, for there is no need to do so.

Of course, if my employers should happen to call and suggest that I report for work on a given day as Sharon Ann Stuart, I'll be ready. There are fifty dresses in my closet that will be clamoring for attention if that morning ever comes.

I am tired of the closet. I am tired of hiding. I am tired of worrying. I am tired of the deception. I am weary of not being able to tell the truth about myself to those who need to know and those who are my friends.

I am tired of not being able to share all of myself, to express all of who I am to my family, my co-workers, my friends and neighbors, and the world in general.

My discomfort in the closet outweighs the risk of penalty. Freedom beckons. Whatever the consequences may be of being so candid here tonight, I am prepared to accept those consequences, good or bad. Nothing can be worse than hiding from the truth. However, that is not to say that I will shrink from defending my rights, should anyone abuse them.

As I stated earlier, I am proud of who I am and what I have done in life. I have done nothing wrong. I make no apologies for being who I am.

I am asking Phyllis Frye to begin listing my two names on the ICTLEP stationery in a way that indicates both names belong to the same individual. It will read something like: "Sharon Ann Stuart, a.k.a. (also known as) Thomas R. Heitz, Attorney."

Now you know who I really am. All of you are my friends and colleagues in this wonderful organization. Now the world out there can know exactly who I am, too. Not everyone out there is a friend, however. I realize that. It is a risk I am prepared to take.

But the world out there, friend or foe, will have to buy the tape from Phyllis, or the proceedings of this conference from Phyllis, if they want to get my story first hand.

The Femme Mirror
Next year, I am hoping that Phyllis will let me repeat this speech as Sharon Ann. Actually Sharon Ann wrote it for Tom, but Tom insisted on giving it first. Next time it will be Sharon Ann's turn to deliver the good news. She deserves it as much as Tom, believe me.

This is the bottom line for me, the result of fifty-three years of struggling with self-definition. It's okay to be male and to express masculinity. It's okay to be male and to express a feminine gender role. It's okay to express both masculine and feminine gender roles. It's okay to tell people who are friends, and who care, the truth about myself. In fact, it's not just okay to do that. It is a necessity. God bless you all.

EDNOTE: This article is published at the author's request. It is not ordinarily the Mirror's policy to publish material compromising a member's security, but Tom and Sharon convinced us this was the right thing to do. The two of them can be very persuasive when they want to be. God bless you and yours, Sharon/ Tom.

Editorial Policy

The Femme Mirror is absolutely committed to protecting the security and confidentiality of all Tri-Ess members. In order to ensure this protection, the **Mirror** conforms to the following editorial policy:

- 1) The **Mirror** will not publish the last name of any Tri-Ess member without the express written consent of the member, unless the surname is known to be a pseudonym.
- 2) We encourage all contributors to the **Mirror** to adopt a pseudonym when submitting articles and letters for publication. We request that you place the surname in quotation marks so that we will know it is a pseudonym.
- 3) We request that each contributor include her Tri-Ess number on all material.
- 4) Contributors should avoid use of true last names in letters or articles, and particularly in accounts of chapter activities and other events. We reserve the right to edit such material to remove surnames or other potentially compromising information.

Please help us to serve you in a professional manner. -- **Mirror Staff**

Hey, Good Looking! Here's more of those "Sometimes Helpful Hints" and more "T.E.S.T." Remember, check the "Chapter News Update" for those little gems mined from chapter newsletters. Do you have a "Helpful Hint" of your own to share with your sisters? Please send it in! (A "Helpful Hint" from your Editors - send it on computer disk!)

Rebecca's Sometimes Helpful Hints Column

This column is very difficult to write. The reason for this is, I can not think of a single thing to write about. You are probably saying to yourself, "That never stopped you before." I've sat down at this stupid computer four times over the last four days, to ultimately look at a blank screen. The problem is, I ran out of material two issues ago. I never imagined this column would go on this long. I figured after two or three columns, someone would have enough sense to stop me. This has not happened. I keep waiting for the letter from the editor that states, "Thank you for your services, but our format has changed and we are only accepting articles that have some sort of merit. If we ever have a drivel column, we will contact you." The letter from the editor has not been received as of this date, so here we go again.

What I've decided to do, is to write on a number of different subjects that are either informative or puzzle me and that by themselves are not long enough for a full column. In other words, "Filler".

Item #1. Want your skin to feel soft and supple and at the same time get rid of some minor lines and wrinkles? Who doesn't? Alpha-Hydrox is on the market in full force. Just what is Alpha-Hydrox? The best I can tell, it's a concentrate of citrus fruit acids, that speeds up the process of the removal of dead skin cells. This is the same stuff that Avon has been pushing for the last few years and is approved by the FDA as one of the only substances that does reduce lines and wrinkles. Under the brand name of Alpha-Hydrox, Wal-Mart sells a variety of face and body creams and lotions. These are priced under \$10.00 and it really does make a noticeable difference within two weeks of use.

Item #2. Clear mascara. Yes that's right, mascara with no color. When I first ran across this product, I thought it was dumb. Why apply mascara that had no color? It was almost self defeating. Was this an exercise for the right wrist? Well, I was wrong. Used by itself, assuming your hair color is somewhat dark, it separates lashes and makes them appear darker and longer. Used as a base for colored mascara, it enhances the eyes even more and makes removal of the colored mascara much easier. Almost every cosmetic manufacturer makes clear mascara. Cover Girl is the one I tried and is available at fine cosmetic counters everywhere. It's also available in grocery stores, drug stores, 7-11, grain and feed stores and almost anywhere else you can think of.

Item #3. Mail order clothing. Buying clothing by mail order presents a set of problems for crossdressers that the rest of the world doesn't experience. The obvious is sizing. But even more important, is the wait between the time you send them the money and order form and the time you receive the merchandise. This can be an eternity for the crossdresser. If you are like me, when you see something you like, you want it now. Some mail order houses can take up to six weeks for delivery.

Our society has become used to slow service. You can bleed to death in the emergency room of a hospital before you can fill out the forms and get to see a doctor. The last time I was in an emergency room, the guy ahead of me was being treated for a musket wound. Anyway, if you must buy mail order, let me give you a couple of invaluable hints. Use a credit card whenever possible; it speeds up the process by at least seven days. Secondly, cut a bunch of one inch squares of paper and use these to cover

the models' faces and legs in the catalogs you are looking at. We (the American public, both female and male) are impulse buyers. We buy the total picture in the catalog. If this were not the case, the models would be slightly over weight and over forty years of age.

Item #4. One size does not fit all.

Item #5. Bikini's, teddies and tap pants, were not designed for the male anatomy.

Item #6. "The Wonder Bra", will not make you look like Dolly Parton.

Item #7. Washable mascara, isn't.

Item #8. Jacquelyn Smith probably doesn't shop at K-Mart.

Item #9. Roseanne Arnold, or whatever her name is now, has had breast reduction in an amount great enough to supply every transsexual in the world with augmentation.

Item #10. Lee's, the press on nail company, is in negotiations with Roseanne to market a new product, to be called, "Lee's Press On Boobs".

Hopefully between now and the next issue of the Mirror, I will be able to come up with a meaningful column. Let's all hope and pray. As always, as a crossdresser, remember what it is you are emulating and do it with style and class. Any comments regarding my sanity, or ideas or columns you have written that I can steal from you, can be sent to:

Rebecca Petersen
P.O. Box 19933
So. Lake Tahoe, CA 96151

T.E.S.T. - Tri-Ess Shoe Talk

by Jaclynn Andmee

Once again, remember whatever I talk about concerning shoe care pertains to both male and female shoes.

Now let's start talking.....

What with today's styles and shapes of heels, I wanted you all to know there are 51 (fifty-one) different types of heels that can go on feminine shoes. That covers both high heels and flats. As for men's heels, there are 55 (fifty-five) different types. Now, when you go to the shoe repair shop for heels on either men's or women's shoes, they will put on the same type of heels you had, unless you ask for something different. If you want something different, they will tell you if it can or can not be done.



Example: I get some women who want leather lifts put on their high heels. This cannot be done, because women's high heels have pin-lifts - inside the heel is a metal shaft, and this is what holds this pin in place. Plus, it is so small that there isn't any place to which I could nail a leather lift. I have converted some high heels (I am talking about the 1" heels) from hard rubber to a pin lift. The way I do this is drill into the heel and insert a 1" dowel pin lift.

While I am talking about dowel pin lifts, let me tell you that on some high heels there isn't a metal shaft inside the heel. On this type they use 1" (one-inch) 2" (two-inch) or 3" (three-inch) dowel pin lifts. This type sits inside the heel by itself.

A lot of times I'll get a pair of heels that have snapped. The reason for this is, the dowel pin was not long enough. Example: if a 1" pin is used instead of a 3"

pin, that leaves roughly two inches inside the heel without support. Plus, there is the hollow hole where the pin goes in, and that's the area that cracks in half. While I am talking about high heels, I must say it's a shame that, what with the cost of shoes, they are made in that fashion.

If you are not comfortable with 1", 2" or higher heels, then you can buy a style called wedge. They do come in very nice styles and do look great with whatever you wear. I myself have both high heels and wedge heels. It doesn't matter if I am wearing a dress, skirt or slacks. What does matter is how my legs are feeling. Sometimes if I know I am going to be on my feet for any length of time, I'll wear the wedge style just for the comfort. It's a judgement call on your part. Even genetic females will say after a long period of time wearing their high heels, that their feet or legs are killing them.

To all my sisters: Please look for comfort first, and the style will fall in place by itself. Then walk with pride and comfort, for we are trying to emulate a beautiful human being. Take good care of your shoes because they carry you. And, as I always say, "Happy, healthy feet carry a happy, healthy person." Enjoy!

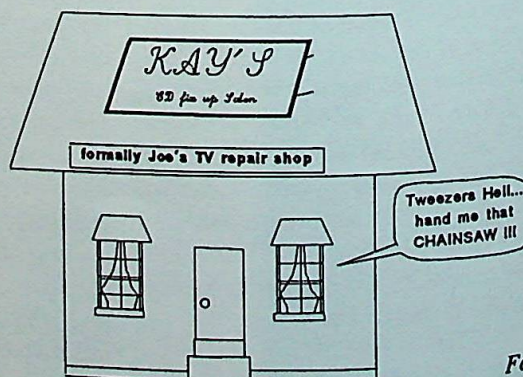
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 FAR BETTER THEN JUST "SPLITTING HAIRS".



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"Swedish Erotica"

by Diane (OH-3377-N)

I arrived about 6 PM on Friday night in Stockholm. Eagerly checking into the Sheraton, I could hardly wait for what lay ahead! Upon entering my room, I knew this would certainly be a night to remember. I laid out my black lingerie, then shaved oh-so-carefully. A nice bubble bath helped me to relax and complemented my mood as I finished shaving my legs. I then carefully began to make up, using the good lighting in the spacious bathroom mirror. As I dressed, I enjoyed the feeling of sensuousness of each fabric as it caressed my smooth skin. A mid-calf-length maroon dress with wide white lace collar, and a shoulder length brunette wig completed my transformation. Perfect! Especially for the Northern European style, where the women of the species in their finest plumage - stylish long dresses and high heels - are commonly sighted. I finished the outfit with a small pearl necklace, pendant pearl earrings, and a couple of bracelets and rings. Soon I would be out the door! Lastly, I applied a lovely magenta lipstick and, as the final touch, a set of deep wine classic-length fake nails that coordinated very well with the color of my dress.

Grabbing my clutch purse and adding a few makeup repair necessities and some "mad money," I confidently strode out into the hallway outside my room and on into the elevator. A lady passed me on the way and smiled, and I returned the smile. After all, that's what real ladies do! And I didn't look back - real ladies don't!

Arriving by elevator at the lobby, I walked across the main floor to ascend the staircase on the other side. A number of people glanced in my direction, and why shouldn't they? After all, I was presenting myself as a well dressed woman on her way to one of the city's finest restaurants for dinner, located right here in the hotel!

When I arrived at the restaurant entrance, the maitre de greeted me warmly. I said, "Hello," in a soft, elevated-pitch feminine voice, and then said, "Just one,

and by the window, if you please." "Certainly, madame," he responded, and led me to my table, never once giving any indication of uneasiness or doubt about my status. He merely seemed pleased to be seating a well-dressed woman. As the window side was a built-in bench seat, he merely pulled the table out to allow me to seat myself. Keeping my back and legs straight, I lowered my tush ever so elegantly to the front edge, then slid back as only a proper lady would!

Soon my waiter arrived, and I ordered the marinated salmon in dill mustard sauce for an appetizer, then the triple filet of salmon, halibut, and poached sole in a mild lobster cream and curry sauce. Yum! A nice glass of white wine - a German Riesling - provided a further touch of class.

As I was ordering, my waiter was a little perplexed by my still somewhat throaty voice that sort of belied my appearance, but I reassured him that I merely had a cold. Still.... I sensed he wasn't quite sure....

I began to notice a Japanese couple in the corner table near mine and we exchanged glances. They had overheard my conversation with the waiter and were perhaps just a little bit curious. I smiled and the lady began to smile and grin at me - and in my mind she knew and approved! Just then I noticed, too, that a few other waiters were congregating with mine and looking my way rather furtively, and then away from my direct gaze back at them. Finally my waiter came over and said somewhat haltingly, "Pardon me, madame, er, uh, but by any chance are you really a man?"

Well, I had indeed been "read," but I responded very quickly, "Yes, and how good of you to tell the difference! After all, I wouldn't want you to embarrass yourself by taking too much of a fancy to me!" He laughed, and that seemed to break the nervous tension in the air. He said, "But why do you dress this way?" I replied that

I thoroughly enjoyed this expression of my softer side, and that I was a strictly heterosexual crossdresser, and not at all gay. In fact, I stated that many men do this, and that we even have a world-wide confederation of men of just such a persuasion - Tri-Ess, the Society for the Second Self.

"Well," he said, "you certainly make a very nice looking woman. Gosh, I thought all men who dressed in women's clothes were drag queens or gay, but you look and act really natural and nice. You look like you really belong here.".....

Reality check. Was this real? No. Was this a dream? No. A fantasy? Yes! But let's see what was going on here. I was in Stockholm, I was dining in a very elegant, candle-lit restaurant, but as my male self. But the above saga could have happened! Let's see how.

I imagined that I was indeed "en femme." Seated at the table with a long table cloth, I could have and did hold my knees together and crossed my legs at the ankle in lady-like fashion, with no one ever the wiser. I sat upright, shoulders back, head held high, chest out, proud of my imagined femininity and occasionally, playfully stroking my (imagined) nyloned legs! (Gosh, I have to get some real erotica into this story somehow!)

I smiled at everyone, and with my manicured fake-nailed fingers, gracefully reached for my wine glass, extending my arm slowly from my side and keeping my elbows in. Of course, I took only dainty, lady-like sips of wine and bites of food, slowly lifting each morsel to my lipstick-kissed lips and eating very softly and slowly. I occasionally patted my mouth very delicately with my napkin to clear away any "stray crumbs."

I smiled, cocked my head, and as you might say, became mesmerized, entranced, and intoxicated by the mood I had set for

myself. I was truly "in the zone" - the femme persona zone, that is.

Yes, I was thinking, feeling, acting, being, and being treated as a female in my mind, despite not being actually dressed as a female. What a rush! What a feeling of exhilaration! And, what great practice for the future when this really could be happening!

It is just this type of mind-work that can help us to develop the necessary mind-set and resultant confidence to allow us to make this fantasy an eventual, actual reality!

I indeed wish I had packed for just such an opportunity, but the femme clothes I had with me for dressing in private in my hotel room would not have allowed me to feel elegant enough to do such formal dining. And I did not have a purse! The entire scene did awaken me to the possibilities, however. The setting and opportunity would have been nearly perfect. The restaurant was not particularly crowded at that time of the evening. Would they have asked a crossdresser to leave? Probably not, if the appearance and behavior meshed. Not at the prices they charged, either! And discovering the male inside the female appearance could easily have been their own embarrassment and awkwardness, not mine. After all, they would have been loathe to create any scene themselves.

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself!" How true!!

So, dear readers, I offer this imagineered experience as an interesting object lesson in the development of our femme personnae. Thinking, feeling, acting, being, being treated as female exists as a state of mind! I can even exist in our mind when we are not actually fulfilling our desire to dress en femme. It's great fun, and more importantly, great practice! After all, most of us do want to evolve in our femme self such that we can be more public. We want to awaken the conscience of the public so that just as we accept ourselves, so they, too, can accept us. And it will be much easier if we act feminine with confidence and without embarrassment.

Ooh, I can hardly wait for my next trip to Stockholm!!!

PenPalProject

Many sisters have written over the years to express their disappointment in not receiving replies to their letters to other Tri-Ess sisters. It seems that while some sisters are wonderfully prolific pen pals, others (for a variety of reasons) are not. To assist those who would like to receive lots of letters, we have compiled a "Pen-Pal List". All you have to do is promise to reciprocate. Just fill out and sign the form below and send it to:

Carol Beecroft
P.O. Box 194
Tulare, CA 93275.

"I promise the courtesy of a reply to all correspondence from my Tri-Ess sisters."

Femme Name _____

Code Number _____

Here's how to write a Pen Pal through the Forwarding Service:

1) Write your letter to your chosen Pen Pal. Include your picture if you wish. If you choose not to include your own return address at first, be sure you include your own Code Number in your letter.

2) Place your letter in an envelope, affix correct postage, and lightly pencil in the name and Code Number of your Pen Pal on the front.

3) Place this envelope inside another envelope and address this outer envelope to:

Tri-Ess Forwarding Service
P.O. Box 194,
Tulare CA 93275

4) Include your return address on the outer envelope and be sure to apply correct postage. Once received at the Forwarding Service, your inner envelope will be properly addressed to your Pen Pal and sent on its way. If or when you and your Pen Pal choose to exchange letters directly is up to you. Have fun, Sisters!

Now, here are the Pen Pals:

AZ-3391-L	Deidre Deanne
AZ-3954-B	Rebecca
CA-3565-V	Charlene
CA-1765-B	Cindy
CA-3845-C	Elaine
CA-1282-V	Fran
CA-3354-N	Michelle
CA-4009-W	Paula
FL-2789-S	Cynthia
FL-3434-C	Debi
FL-3892-B	Jeanne
FL-2520-B	Joan Ann
FL-3720-R	Karen Rose
FL-3640-C	Norma
HI-3562-A	Alana
IA-1971-D	Maureen
MO-3752-B	Laura
MS-3443-M	Linda
MT-3444-P	Jeri
MT-3489-T	Karen Anne
NC-3743-H	Ann
NC-3723-C	Sherri
NJ-3818-L	Carol Ann
NJ-3724-C	Fawn
NJ-3884-K	Joann
NJ-2548-W	Joanne Michelle
NJ-3775-B	Lauren
NY-1320-N	Connie
NY-3433-T	Donna
NY-3277-H	Evelyn
NY-3943-F	Lisa
OH-3620-S	Fran
OK-2222-R	Regina
PA-2542-K	Jan
TN-1230-H	Rita
TX-2358-F	Dena Kay
TX-3467-B	Priscilla
TX-3095-M	Stefani
VA-2642-I	Madelyn
VA-3948-R	Marjorie
VA-3343-P	Peggy
VA-3401-W	Samantha
WI-3846-L	Adrienne

If you wrote us asking to be placed on the Pen Pal List and your name does not appear above, please write us again. We are sorry, but sometimes we do "drop the ball." (Or, in this case, the name!)

Public Dressing

By Allison Marsh

Perhaps the most controversial question which comes up in crossdresser discussions is how we should look when we go out.

In an Ingersoll Friday Night TV-TS support group meeting, we were discussing appearances and personal grooming. Several of our participants were looking pretty raunchy, and I felt it was unintentional. I said, "Well, let's face it, nobody wants to look like a slut."

Three people out of the fifteen there responded, "Speak for yourself!" That awakened me to the fact that in our community there are those who choose to look cheap, or to dress for "shock value."

Because a few attendees at the Texas T Party chose to dress like street-walking prostitutes and loiter in the hotel lobby among mixed guests, that entire event lost its option to return the next year to that hotel.

The next year, the T Party organizers announced that attendees who chose unconventional (my word, not theirs) women's clothing would be asked to change or leave. For this they suffered a barrage of criticism from those who insisted they should be able to dress however they chose (with no regard for anyone else's feelings).

I attended the next T Party, and found we had almost the whole hotel (yes, a different hotel) to ourselves. But on the last day, there was a large women's group in a meeting room past which we all had to walk between our rooms and our own dining room.

Several of our people, (I think) including the Phillippes, recognized the opportunity for constructive outreach, and made some polite, dignified explanations. It began to look as though goodwill was being created among these ladies. Then came a couple of our group in five inch heels, tight miniskirts, fishnet hose, stringy looking wigs, severe makeup, and oversized boobs. The best of efforts was in
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stantly undone. More than a hundred of us became undesirables in the eyes of all those ladies.

At last year's Esprit, there was one person who chose to dress similarly, with outrageous makeup, extreme clothing, and a dead give-away wig. I doubt if there was a single person among us who would have wanted to be seen with her if she had been a genetic woman. I think she must have been the most lonely person at the event,



*...there are those who... dress for
"shock value."*

and I think she intended to be. She could have been quite attractive had she chosen to so groom herself.

When we discuss "friendly" vendors in our open TV-TS group at Ingersoll, I sometimes hear complaints about merchants who have asked some of our people not to shop there during regular hours. In nearly every such store, I have shopped there myself and never received an unfriendly or restrictive remark. Why the discrepancy? Some of our people have chosen fantasy role models who, as genetic women, would never be welcome in those stores.

Others seem to have dressed defiantly, almost daring anyone to criticize their right to appear in any mode they choose. These people become belligerent when someone reminds them that society doesn't like to have its rules flaunted.

Others among us simply need more information on how to choose and brush out a wig; how to avoid combinations of clothing that do not go together; how to determine the differences between casual

wear, business, and party wear; how to apply make up that looks natural instead of phony. This group really wants to be dressed right for the occasion, but doesn't know how. They learn.

Still another group wants to look passable and be accepted in a feminine role, but will probably always be read because of masculine body characteristics they cannot hide, masculine posture and body movements they seem unable to change. These are the people who seem to show the most real courage in trying to project the gender choice they have made. They need our support, and they need a public perception which recognizes their sincerity in fulfilling their own personal needs.

...[others] dress for fun, for adventure, and for outreach - to let the public know there are people like us—people who are nice..

Another group among us, often in support of their less skillful sisters, know exactly what it takes to pass, and can indeed pass whenever they choose. But they prefer to leave something a little less than perfect so that persons around them can tell they are properly dressed, well behaved men in women's clothing. These people don't dress for shock value; they dress for fun, for adventure, and for outreach to let the public know there are people like us—people who are nice.

And perhaps last, there are those among us who love to crossdress and pass, who feel the best when everyone present assumes them to be well groomed ladies with dignity and class.

So what's the "right way" to crossdress?

No one can speak for everyone in the community—we're too diverse. But for those of us who ply our course on the sea of public opinion, there is reason to watch our wake, to be concerned for those who come after us, and those who are with us. That just doesn't include crinkling up the generally accepted social standards among women and throwing our trash in their faces. It does not include exaggerating our gestures so that we look like we are ridiculing feminine behavior. It never includes rudeness, either in language or other social interaction.

"Dignity and Class" is not the same as passing.



The Femme Mirror
Many people who crossdress and behave with dignity and class are often "read". But they are seldom asked to leave. And although they may collect a few snickers from teenagers-on-the-loose, they are usually responded to as women, and usually with courtesy. These people really do a job in reminding the rest of the world that many of us "different" people are very "nice" people.

From time to time, I think we all need to look ourselves over very carefully and ask, "At my age, and for this social event, would I respect a genetic woman who looks, dresses, and behaves as I do?" And if the answer is "no", then we need to investigate our possibilities for improvement.

Big Sister Report

by Cynthia Silva

The Big Sister Program is cruising along in calm waters. As of August 1, 1994, we have 212 new members and 79 Big Sisters. We have had requests for 36 Big Sisters and have assigned them all.

There is a dire shortage of Big Sisters in several states and Canada. Several states have no Big Sisters, and it is becoming interesting in finding a Big Sister for several new members. We do hope that more of you will volunteer for this delightful adventure.

Since taking over the helm of this wonderful program, we have instituted a couple of changes. First, new members are sent a letter welcoming them to Tri-Ess and briefly explaining the Big Sister Program. They are told that if they want a Big Sister, they should drop me a note, and I will assign someone as geographically close to them as possible. Second, if their mailing address is safe, secure, and they give me permission, their mailing address is given to their assigned Big Sister. This reduces the time and postage for the initial contact. So far it has been successful.

A Big Sister is assigned no more than three Little Sisters during any twelve-month period. This is becoming rather difficult in a few states already. Chi Chapter of

Chicago, IL, has volunteered to assign a Big Sister to anyone living in their area. This is greatly appreciated. This is a superb idea, and one that other chapters may wish to consider doing as part of their outreach program. A great way for chapters to become known and to gain new members.

On June 25, I had the privilege of making a Big Sister report to the Tri-Ess Board of Directors during their Summer Board Meeting in Memphis, TN. It was interesting to sit in on the Board Meeting and also to meet the Board Members.

I would like to thank the 36 Big Sisters who have accepted assignments. These are:

Samantha	AZ-3148-C, 2 LS
Fran	CA-1282-V
Diane	CA-3190-H
Paulene	CA-3565-V, 3 LS
Angie	CO-3869-H
Lori	CT-2707-L
Carol	FL-2448-B
Joanne	FL-2999-P
Lauren	GA-3390-H
Kinney	ID-2808-N
Candace	IL-3416-M
Linda	MI-2556-L
Sofronia	MN-3535-G
Cissy	MS-3104-S
Rebecca	NC-2702-P

Connie	NY-1302-N
Evelyn	NY-3277-H
Fran	NY-3262-E
Terri	NY-2130-W, 3 LS
Radene	NV-2653-R
Janet	OH-3393-S
Joyce	OH-3238-S
Rhonda	OH-2499-M
Raina	OK-3630-W
Sue	PA-2164-C
Bobbi	SC-2812-L
Sherri	TX-2666-B
Janette	UT-2880-C, 2LS
Samantha	VA-3401-W
Krystal	WA-2835-Q
Kathy	WI-2729-L
Paula	WI-2507-M

I dearly hope that I left no one off this most honored list. Thank to all of you for your super service.

One minor note: If there are any Big Sisters who are no longer able to participate as a Big Sister, PLEASE let me know. It is somewhat embarrassing to assign a Big Sister to a Little Sister, only to discover that the Big Sister is no longer able to participate.

Thanks once again.
Cynthia Silva
P.O. Box 18884
Tampa, FL 33679-8884

Fall 1994

S.P.I.C.E. '94

Special Feature

Here, in the words of participants, is our SPICE '94 feature.

SPICE '94 - What's Cookin'?

by Frances Fairfax

The Second Annual Spouses' and Partners' International Conference for Education was held this July in Chicago. In attendance this time were many more husbands who came with their wives, a very encouraging development. Three days of workshops by our professional faculty were designed to provide the tools for individual growth and relationship-building. Separate sessions for men and women provided freedom for self-expression in a safe, supportive peer environment. Joint sessions and scheduled break times allowed couples time for interaction and sharing of things learned. Faculty were available for private consultations. Serious discussions and heavy emotional issues were lightened by spontaneous flashes of humor and outpourings of love.

Was SPICE lots of "fun?" Not exactly. Joy and tears, hurt and healing, healthier individuals and rebuilt relationships, life's broken pieces reassembled into new patterns, all goes a bit beyond "fun." Dealing with life issues long avoided, confronting one's own shortcomings, seeking a partner's forgiveness, and learning new ways of sharing lives uniquely complicated by the "gender gift" - that was the essence of SPICE.

Imagine, if you will, a well-stocked spice rack in our gender kitchen. You'll find cinnamon and nutmeg and cloves, bringing to mind rich holiday sweets; parsley and sage, thyme and tarragon, bay leaves for hearty main dishes; exotic

pungent curries, chili powders, and peppers that bring fire to the mouth and tears to the eyes. Their variety can be overwhelming, and not every element is to one's particular taste. But, they are all there, essential elements in the cook's array of menu offerings. When a spouse's comfortable, familiar meat-and-potatoes life menu is suddenly jolted by an infusion of gender curry, indignation and indigestion are not surprising results. But, one can learn to like curry, if served up in moderation by a cook of reasonable skill. Sweet and sour sauce, ginger and garlic can make meat-and-potatoes sing, or drown it. Imagine an international boarding school, where, like it or not, the students take turns doing the

Sandra Cole, Ph.D., Past President of A.A.S.E.C.T. and prominent member of the SPICE faculty, delivers Keynote Address.

cooking, and all must eat the results of their labor, and there's no going back home to Mom's cooking. SPICE conferences are the cooking classes, where those who are willing can learn how to handle the peculiar spice called the gender gift. Bon appetit!



SPICE Director Linda Peacock at the Registration Desk.

The Seminars

Here's just a sampling of the seminars and professional presenters: Dr. Sandra Cole on "Sexual Awakening and Response"; Dr. Robert Priore on "Hormones" and "Women's Health Issues"; Dr. Deloris Roys on "Boundaries"; "Dreams" and "Dealing With Gender Issues" with Niela Miller. Gender community leaders as Rev. Kathy Helms, Jane Ellen Fairfax, and Maryann Kirkland (all in male guise, of course) dealt with such topics as "Putting Balance Into Your Life", "Religious Issues", and "Dealing With Family Adversities." Dr. Peggy Rudd, in a luncheon keynote speech to the spouses, discussed how to handle a "Red Lion Attack". The best one-liner of the conference was Dr. Cole's, who, when the men's discussions got rather heated at one point, gently asked, "Where's all that femininity right now?"



Dr. Peggy Rudd with the "Red Lion" whose presence so threatens our Eden.

Onnalee's Op/Ed

(from the July 1994 En Femme, newsletter of Beta Gamma Chapter, Minneapolis)

What a difference a year makes! I have just returned from the second annual SPICE meeting in Chicago, and I am all pumped up with enthusiasm for the work that was done there. I took my usual notes, consisting of small pencil sketches of the participants - presenters and attendees. This enabled my ego and self-esteem to get a good pump-up too, as many gathered on the last day eager to see my drawings. Almost everyone offered amazed complimentary comments about the likenesses.

These were in the same book I had used for last year's conference in Dallas. I was pleased to find that while only 15 from '93 had returned, the total had increased, as more women had brought their men along to experience the parallel programs planned just for them. At one point, there was some agitation about the completeness of the separation, but individual integrity was maintained. The issues being addressed were too important, too freighted with emotional impact to risk vulnerability to private relationship tensions. Getting the women to identify and admit to some REAL problems, to say nothing of the effort to find a way to reasonable solutions, is

complicated and scary enough without introducing the subliminal tensions of spousal expectations.

As last year, our professional presenters were with us, this time for three whole days, moving back and forth between the men's and women's programs. Unlike last year, this time the code of "NO crossdressing" was strictly observed. (Although Mel, Dr. Peggy's husband, seemed to think that the cuddly brown stuffed bear mascot in a pink print pinafore might be male and therefore be in violation.)

I was favored with long, friendly chats with Larry (Lauren), current president of Sigma Epsilon Chapter and a member of Beta Gamma, along with his lovely wife/companion Connie, with whom a very special bond has been forged. Gil (Jane Ellen) and Frances Fairfax, together with Linda Peacock, treated me as an "insider", a great compliment. So comfortable and valued did I feel, I was able to extend my care and support to a couple of young women new to the phenomenon and personal pain of their husbands' need to dress. I also found two women who held the same position as I relative to their

husbands. It IS a great relief to learn that one's thinking and responses are NOT unique and exclusive.

I was even able to NOT go into a psychic tail-spin when I was told that there were two or three women who were very angry about my drawing them, demanding the destruction of the sketches as a violation of boundaries. The professionals' and staff's response was that MY boundaries had been violated by women who were possibly displacing their anger in an inappropriate way. Wow!

Subsuming the conference content and effect into a few words, those words would be, "Communicate, Listen, Negotiate." This was not a fuzzy, feel-good pastiche of pandering philosophies. The problems and issues addressed were hard, complex and often painful. Emotions were touched, exposed, and even rubbed raw. But ways to solutions and healing were offered. The letter "E" in SPICE stands for Education. The best line serving that goal was/is: "Crossdressing is not chosen, it is discovered." I could see young women experiencing the dawn of understanding when they heard that. (Me, too!)

Fall 1994

A Report on SPICE by Diane S.



I went to Chicago for the SPICE conference this year and it was Great! The men's programs were much better planned than last year's, and there were a lot of new faces as well as familiar ones. Sheila Kirk was there in male guise, and we were privileged to meet her new Significant Other, who is just lovely. I was honored to be asked to sit on a panel of wives who fielded questions from the men in attendance - the sort of questions they were either too shy or afraid to ask their own wives. It was a wonderful experience. If you are married, have a girlfriend, or just have a friend who is curious as to what this is all about, I

recommend that you tell them about SPICE. It is a great way for them to get to know other women around the country in similar or identical situations, hear the thoughts of the helping professionals who present the seminars and workshops, and build a support network they can tap into as needed. It will give them a better understanding of the crossdresser in their lives, what s/he is going through, where s/he has come from, and how it can affect the relationship. It will also provide her with factual information and possibly allay some of the fears she may be experiencing. I plan to attend next year if possible.

(EDNOTE: This was a note originally posted on the Prodigy Lifestyles BBS, and was reprinted from the CD News, newsletter of the Rochester CD Network, Oct.-Nov. 1994.)

A Taste of S.P.I.C.E. by Lauren H.

(Reprinted from the August 1994 Southern Belle, newsletter of Sigma Epsilon Chapter). Lauren is a husband who participated in SPICE.)

"It is only with the heart that one sees clearly, for what is essential is invisible to the eye."

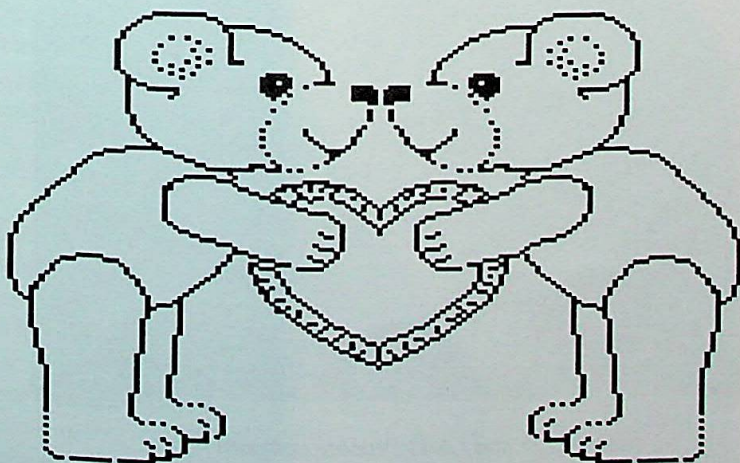
This is a quote I have found to be very meaningful for me, over the years; something which I believe some 70 couples and spouses found to be very true during the 1994 SPICE Conference in Chicago last July.

Wives, significant others and husbands came together to spend three days of intensive self-discovery to help better understand their feelings, while developing communication and listening skills which allow a deeper understanding of each other's needs and feelings. These members of the gender community took the loving steps toward a better understanding and commitment for their future and their relationships.

The men and women were together for some programs, though most were held separately to provide an opportunity for feelings and emotions to be expressed honestly without the restraints of a loved one hearing and having his or her feelings hurt. The SPICE participants took part in a variety of programs, and shared their hearts, fears, and expectations with others who struggle with many of the same dreams and fears.

Programs included: "Sexual Awakenings and Responses," "Loving," "Hormones," "Boundaries," "Family Issues," "Sexual Conflicts," "Putting Balance Into Your Life," "Male Sexuality," "Women's Viewpoints," "Communication," "Honesty" and many others.

Most programs evoked emotional responses from laughter to tears. Many issues and topics were well-received and enlightening, while others evoked deep



anger and hostility. Some issues dealt with topics that both the men and the women had either evaded or denied within their relationships, with often the avoidance of these very issues being the root cause of disharmony within the relationship.

Overall, through the laughter and tears, enlightenment came and steps were made toward healing. It was with their hearts that they began to see what was truly important in their lives.

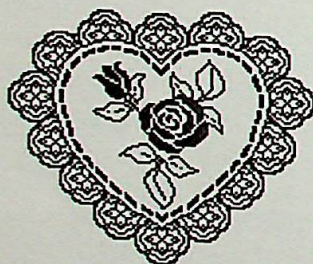
For those within the gender community who did not attend SPICE, a true opportunity was lost to improve understanding, acceptance and love.

Regrettably, it is too easy to make excuses for not attending SPICE. But, through planning and preparation, all your excuses and obstacles can be overcome. Bottom line: if you truly love your partner and you wish to make your relationship work, you will together get to SPICE. It will give you both the understanding, commitment and tools to enrich your love and your relationship.

Fortunately, opportunity will knock again! Next year the SPICE conference will be in Memphis.



"Boundaries" talk by Dr. Deloris Roys provoked lively discussions.



Onnalee's Op/Ed

(Cont. from p. 37)

The question I had brought from Beta Gamma was, "Which is preferable: the burden of maintaining secrecy from a spouse, or the conflict/consequences of that spouse's knowing of the crossdressing?" The answer is still pending, but given the stated purpose of Tri-Ess and SPICE, I think one can guess the shape of it. I will continue to share the ideas and effects of SPICE '94 with you, and with any member's wife/partner who asks. (Byword: No crossdresser-bashing allowed; anger, fear and tears, OK; then - on to living plans.)



Niela Miller and Linda Peacock compare notes.

A Report from SPICE '94

by Linda Williams

as reported in the October '94 Renaissance News

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter and Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter of Renaissance raised funds to send Phyllis K. to the 1994 SPICE conference in Chicago (Spouses' & Partners' International Conference for Education, sponsored by Tri-Ess and other community organizations). Here are comments on the event by Linda Williams and her Significant Other, Phyllis K.

Linda's Comments

I would like to thank the CPC and LSV Chapters for sponsoring my wife Phyllis's attendance at SPICE '94. I would also like to share a few of the many things I learned about myself and other crossdressers.

I was surprised that some crossdressers did not want their wives to attend, while others encouraged it with the hope that their partners would find solutions to their problems (because, the crossdressers certainly have none).

Among the issues discussed at the conference was the problem of selfishness. The crossdresser can be a very selfish person. He often pushes his partner's boundaries to the limit because he believes he was born special-gendered and his partner should cater to his needs. This portion of the conference was conducted by Deloris Tyler Roys, a licensed social worker.

In Dr. Sandra Cole's discussion she made the observation that if we could tap into femininity we could use this unique ability to make our partners happy.

mentioned that we should take care of ourselves and that men in particular should be aware of the possibility of problems such as prostate cancer.

I must congratulate the gentlemen who coordinated all of the men's activities, Gil Fairfax and the Rev. Gary Helms. They did a fantastic job.

Well, there may be nothing wrong with crossdressing, but speaking for myself, there are certainly things wrong with the crossdresser - things that I had the opportunity to think about in depth at SPICE '94. As some of you know, I've had a struggle relating my religious beliefs and crossdressing. At SPICE I found my answer. The spirit of sharing and helping

one another I experienced there cannot be evil.

Also, some of you know that I am presently in counseling for post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) and am a member of a Vietnam Veterans' support group, as well as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I've found this type of therapy (sharing with people who have similar problems) very helpful, and feel it would be great if we would have time at Renaissance meetings for group sharing.

In summary, if I could more effectively realize my feminine side to help control my male ego, I feel I would be a better husband, father, Christian and Renaissance member.

As you can see in these few lines, I've learned a lot, and I encourage you to send your partner to SPICE '95. Even better, why not accompany her?

Phyllis's Comments

I would like to thank the GP and LSV chapters of Renaissance for sponsoring my trip to SPICE '94.

I learned a lot about myself and how to deal with my husband's crossdressing. I also found a lot of other women who are dealing with the same situation. Linda Peacock did an excellent job of organizing all the programs, as well as helping where she could to comfort all who needed it.

I hope that in the future other women will receive sponsorship to SPICE conferences so they too can have an opportunity to share in the realization that they are not alone.

SPICE '95 will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, July 26 to 30. I hope to see Linda Peacock and all of you there.



Robert Priore, M.D.,
Fall 1994

An Open Letter From Sheila Kirk

To my sisters in the transgendered community,

I have just returned from Chicago, where I attended the SPICE convention. I gave four lectures there and shared with other professionals, a rare and inspiring experience.

Forty-four women attended, as well as twenty-eight men. The men came with wives and partners - the remaining women came unaccompanied. Both men and women in the four day conference experienced phenomenal emotional extremes and very deep soul searching. The professionals present in many instances felt the very same joy, pain, frustration, anger and fear as the participants. It was a conference I will never forget.

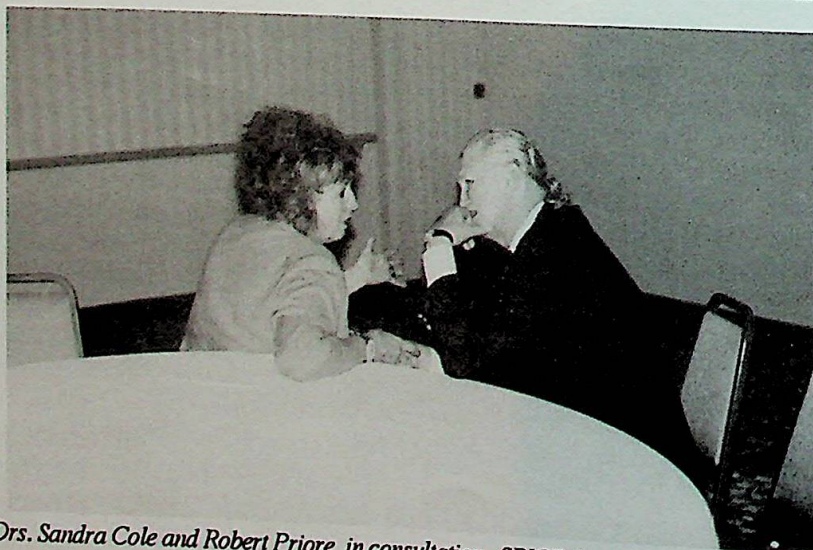
It's a very necessary convention in this community. I want to see it continue, and to grow. It should have hundreds attending. I can't believe that only seventy couples in this country have problems of acceptance and adjustment. I can't believe that even five times that number have lives of pain, and indecision, and insecurity because of the transgendered spirit.

In truth, you would have to come to such a convention to know fully the power, and the importance, of such a gathering. But imagine women sharing their feelings, their hurt, their disappointment in one room.

Imagine men in another room, telling each other their mistakes, their worries, their hopes and fears, and their appreciation for their partners, expressing their deep love and doing it with tears, and at times, inability to speak at all.

My dear friends, you must support SPICE. Support it with marketing approaches, with funding, and with participation. The women in your life deserve information and support. Only a few will decide to reject and bolt after such an event. Most will accomodate, and reevaluate, to accomodate more when they learn and begin to understand. And who profits from this? With no doubt, the transgendered partner. In many instances, the two together will gain immeasurably from a conference of this kind. It's a fact, certainly, that some couples will not need such a coming together, and others will never attend because their positions are fixed and rigid, but the couples in between these extremes are legion. The opportunity to learn about ourselves and each other is golden. You make a mistake if you ignore my statement. This conference has potential to make your lives together much more rich, much more close, much more joyous.

The next SPICE convention is in Memphis, Tennessee, next July. Plan for it - discuss it - tell other couples of your intentions - and then do it! Attend SPICE - you will not regret it - and neither will I!



Drs. Sandra Cole and Robert Priore in consultation. SPICE thanks you both very much!



One Final Word....

Can you see from this why those of us who have attended SPICE are so enthusiastically inviting the rest of you to try it? SPICE 95 will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, July 26 - 30. Besides the all-star lineup of professional faculty and community leaders, SPICE Director Linda Peacock and her Planning Board have lined up some excursions to such local attractions as Graceland. Room rates and registration have been kept to a bare minimum, and Memphis is a major airline hub city. You almost can't afford NOT to come! We're looking forward to seeing you there!

S.P.I.C.E. 1995

Dates: Wednesday, July 26 to Sunday, July 30, 1995

City: Memphis, Tennessee

Hotel: Wilson World Hotel
Room Rates: \$59.00 /night plus tax, Double or King

Registration Fees:
\$125.00 per person for full 3-day program, 6 meals
\$95.00 per person for Friday-Saturday, 4 meals
\$75.00 per person for one-day sessions, 2 meals

Write: Linda Peacock
P.O. Box 24031
Little Rock, AR 72221
501-227-8798 after 5PM C.S.T.

What's That TS Doing Here, Anyhow?

A Column by Dallas Denny

On the Subject of Hormones...

One of the major problems with our community is that crossdressers and transsexual persons are often at odds with one another. Transsexual persons assure me they are "different" from "those crossdressers" and crossdressers assure me "that transsexual" is really a crossdresser gone tragically wrong, or that transsexual people are all crazy.

"...the main difference ...between [crossdressers and transsexuals] is that the members of one group have a commitment to sexual reassignment, and the members of the other group do not."

I've been interacting with both crossdressers and transsexual persons for about five years now, and the major difference I see between the two groups is that the members of one group have a commitment to sexual reassignment, and the members of the other group do not. I don't see any consistent differences in terms of the level of gender dysphoria, passability, or feminine personality. Some of the most gender dysphoric persons I know are committed to remaining in their original roles because of friends, family, and employment, or because they feel their physical characteristics would make living in the other gender difficult. And some of the most masculine looking, acting, and thinking people I know are totally committed to sexual reassignment, often with totally unrealistic expectations.

"...it's when crossdressers make permanent changes [to their bodies] without coming to terms with the effect that will have on their lives that they get into trouble."

Considering my own approach to resolving my gender dilemma, it would be hypocritical for me to not support the right of the individual to self-determination. But I would be both blind and foolish to ignore those who are driving head on into brick walls. It is only normal for a crossdresser

to fantasize about being a female, or to desire breasts, more shapely legs, or smoother skin. Every crossdresser fights a battle with himself the first time he shaves his legs or trims his eyebrows; I know, I've fought those battles with myself. But the danger point is reached when the individual makes body modifications which jeopardize his male life and relationships when he has not reconciled the risk with the reality.

This can happen with something as innocuous as shaving legs or plucking eyebrows. During my teen years, I missed hundreds of opportunities to swim because my legs were shaved. It wasn't that I didn't want to swim, but smooth legs were more important. I couldn't have it both ways. I chose not to swim because I was unwilling to endure the embarrassment and possible ridicule of showing up at the pool with smooth legs. With time the hair bearing state of my legs became less important, but it was a real enough problem at the time.

I had the same sort of difficulty in my early adulthood with my eyebrows. Plucked brows were much closer to my feminine ideal, but let's face it, they stayed plucked when I had to go out into the world as a man, which was most of the time, and caused people to see me as effeminate. That wasn't something I was willing to accept, so for the most part, my brows remained natural.

Leg hair and brows will grow back. Other changes are permanent, and it's when crossdressers make permanent changes without coming to terms with the effect that will have on their lives, that they get into trouble.

Of course, what I have worked around to here is hormones. They are inexpensive, easy to procure, and easy to take, and they are abused by incredible numbers of crossdressers. They buy them on the black market, steal or appropriate them from their wives or girlfriends, or obtain them

from a "friend." I put the word "friend" in quotation marks on purpose. Anyone who would give you such a powerful body-altering substance, knowing you will be taking it without medical supervision, is no friend. Hormones pose significant medical risks when not taken under a doctor's care.

"With time enough on hormones, it becomes very problematic that one will be able to function and live as a man."

Hormones are an essential part of sexual reassignment. In fact, it is hormones, and not surgery, which made sexual reassignment possible. And therein lies the danger. With time enough on hormones, it becomes very problematic that one will be able to function and live as a man.

I am physically and emotionally a very different person today, at age 44, than I was at age 30, when I popped that first tablet of Diethylstilbestrol into my mouth. Hormones have changed me to the extent that I am not perceived to be a man, no matter how I dress, and no matter how I act. Believe me, before I began taking them, I would never have been read for a woman without a wig and lot of help from Estee Lauder. I might add that I myself obtained my hormones from a black market source. I remember well the sense of guilt, of intrigue, of danger. But I sought out hormones in 1980, when there was for all practical purposes no gender community. I had been to the only gender program in hundreds of miles, where after spending hundreds of dollars, I was told by well-meaning but ignorant doctors that I was too functional as a male to be transsexual.

As I had already made the decision to obtain hormonal therapy, I was placed in the unenviable position of having to either lie to the doctors, telling them what they wanted to hear, or to break the law to obtain hormones. A distant third option was to accede to the "wisdom" of the doctors and remain in the male role. I chose to break the

law rather than to be more fundamentally untrue to myself by lying to the doctors. I remained on hormones illegally until February, 1989, when I first learned of the Standards of Care and received a referral to a therapist who was knowledgeable about gender dysphoria. By May I was on hormones legally.

Because I found myself on the horns of that dilemma 13 years ago, I work very hard to make sure that others will not be in the same predicament. I've worked very hard to identify and develop resources in the Atlanta area and throughout the U. S. , so that others will not be forced to go against their innermost natures, breaking the law or telling lies in order to do what they must do.

"Abuse of hormones is epidemic in the gender community nationwide..."

It's now possible and in fact quite easy to obtain a referral letter for hormonal therapy after exploring one's options over a 90-day period with a therapist. That's not a large hurdle. In fact, it's not a hurdle at all, for a main focus during those short three months is to help you understand your options as an individual with gender dysphoria, and what the consequences of your actions will be. That's why I am so pained when people I know take hormones surreptitiously, without medical supervision, without the benefits of counseling, and without having worked through the costs of what they are doing.

"...taking hormones for all the wrong reasons..."

Hormones are not magic bullets for growing breasts. If you want breasts, put on a bra and stuff it with grapefruit and go to work tomorrow, and you'll see the effect having breasts would have in your present life. Hormones are not something which it is advisable to start and stop at will, for teeter-tottering can have very deleterious effects on calcium metabolism and on emotional equilibrium. They are not something to take unless under a doctor's care, for they pose significant risks for blood clotting, especially in those over forty, and they can cause liver damage. Hormones are not something to take unless you have made an absolute and total commitment to them and are willing to

accept their consequences.

Abuse of hormones is epidemic in the gender community nationwide, and it is in fact a major problem in Tri-Ess. To her credit, Jane Ellen Fairfax has acknowledged the problem and is taking active steps to deal with it. Linda Peacock has made a similar stand. Sigma Epsilon is not exempt from the problem of abuse of hormones. More than a few members have experimented with them or are currently taking them. Some have done it honorably, following the HBGDA Standards of Care, and acknowledging that they are taking hormones as part of their process of self discovery.

But others are taking hormones for all the wrong reasons, and without facing the ramifications of what they are doing. They sneak out of the house because, "Oh, no! they couldn't possibly tell their neighbors!" They hide their pills from their wives, too. Their performance at their job suffers because of emotional turmoil caused by the hormones. All the while their bodies are slowly and inexorably changing in a direction that will eventually make it impossible or at best highly unlikely for them to retain the things they value and are clinging to so dearly— their wives, their children, their careers, their male friends.

Because I have had sex reassignment, I am sometimes sought out by Sigma Epsilon members who are feeling gender conflicted. Most say they want to take hormones. I tell them to find a therapist and work through their problems. Some do. Most don't bother to take me up on my offer of a referral to a therapist. Some, I am sure, eventually end up on illegal hormones. On the short term, I have no way of knowing who does and who doesn't. On the long term, it will be apparent to even the most casual observer.

I have never revealed the names of the people who have come to me for advice or help, even though most of them are well-known to the group because they have spoken in a similar way to any number of people. I would never make it public knowledge based on our interactions that so-and-so came to me, or that so-and-so is on hormones. But I am ashamed to say that I am not above passing on gossip. If I hear that someone is on hormones, well, hey, I'm just a conduit for a rumor already in circulation. I'm only human, and in the

The Femme Mirror
social context of the group, names sometimes get mentioned. I'm not indiscreet, but perhaps I'm no more discrete when it comes to rumors than anyone else. It's a tendency I need to watch, just as does everyone else.

"...what will you do when, years down the road, you are unable to pass as a man?"

The bottom line here is, if you can't do the time, don't do the crime. If you can't handle a rumor that you're on hormones, then you probably are taking them, and you probably aren't dealing with it as you should be dealing with it. What in the world are you going to do when those breast buds come poking through your shirt at work? What are you going to do when you need to take your shirt off? What are you going to tell your wife or girlfriend when your erections go south? How will you explain your crying jags and fits of depression? How will you react when you end up in the hospital with a heart attack because you've been taking twice the recommended dose of Premarin? And what will you do when, years down the road, you are unable to pass as a man?

I may be transsexual, and I certainly won't betray your confidence, but that doesn't mean that I will condone foolish and illegal behavior. If you are feeling gender dysphoric, then fine. Explore it. Do so honestly, and let it take you where it will lead you. But don't go skulking around in the shadows, deluding yourself and those who love you and breaking the law when there is absolutely no reason for you to do so, and becoming angry when someone innocently speculates about what is becoming more and more obvious every day.

Isn't it ironic that something that can ultimately make someone so much more physically feminine is so often pursued in such an insensitive, masculine way?

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Ed. Note: Dallas Denny is the founder and Executive Director of the American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc. (AEGIS), and Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Chrysalis Quarterly. She is a true "Friend of Tri-Ess," and we are pleased to reprint her article here.

Fall 1994

One Crossdresser's Wife to Another

by "Jessica"

*"Jessica", a crossdresser's wife,
posted this note to another spouse
"on-line"....*

I don't post very often, but I would love to write you about my view and perceptions of crossdressing. I must say that when I found out a year ago, I really appreciated the support and views of other posters. I guess I didn't feel that great on hearing about this side of my husband, but I rather suspected something was up, and I think the fear of the unknown is a lot worse than reality.

When I first found out, it was pretty devastating, and I felt like I didn't want to hear about it and tried to act like it wasn't really happening. I have to say it was tough on both of us. We both spent a lot of time soul-searching and had emotional swings and a lot of misunderstandings.

What helped me the most was going to a quiet place and having a heart-to-heart talk. He was great about letting me ask tons of questions, and he answered them honestly. I think this was tough on him, but I really needed to know as much as possible about the whole concept. Just that incident made a world of difference.

He told me about his life growing up. He would dress, then had the tendency to purge occasionally, thinking how strange he was and that he wouldn't do it again. But the feeling never went away. He would deny it to himself for a while and try and put it out of his mind. He would succeed for a while, but it always came creeping back. He told me it was something he wished wasn't happening to him because it made him feel guilty. But there was nothing he could do about it. He would make himself put this "thing" in the back of his mind but it was always there to haunt him.

I felt such compassion for him having to wrestle with this whole life. This isn't a passing thing; it is a very real part of his life and always will be. It made me feel



happy knowing I was so important to him, that he would tell me his innermost secret, and that he would risk it all by telling me. I appreciate that he feels he can trust me and our love so much.

I would have to say the last year has been a turning point in our marriage. We have such a deep love and compassion for each other! He loves me more than ever and expresses it so freely now. We have slowly and carefully jumped over the different hurdles. He is always very concerned for my feelings and is careful not to go too fast for me, and he lets me make the calls.

The first time I saw "her" in all her glory was a pretty strange situation. But we did it slowly, and I knew and appreciated the fact that he loved me enough to trust me with his secret. We started out with an occasional dress-up session at home. He left it at that until we reached a level of comfort, and then we proceeded to a short outing in a different town a short distance from our home. It was scary for both of us, but I felt like I was "there" for him. I helped him with his makeup and wardrobe, and I have to admit it was fun. I felt like I was helping my little sister getting ready for the prom.

Every time we approached another occasion, it got easier. We have now gone out as ladies (best girl friends) several times and have had a ball. It is so different from our usual outings that I make it exciting for us both. We look at clothes and makeup

like a couple of teenagers. We usually include lunch or dinner and really do have a great time. Even if you don't venture out as two women, you can go out in your usual attire and pick out new stuff for your home sessions. My wardrobe has doubled, as we are close enough in size in all except shoes that we can both wear the new stuff. I even use one of his wigs sometimes and go out as "Michelle." It can be wonderful.

We have such a close and loving relationship now, and I have found him to be so sensitive to my feelings, and he does everything he can to make my day-to-day life happy. He told me he made a pact with himself that if he told me and I accepted him as a "her," then he would make it his focus to make me as happy as he could for the rest of our lives.

So far, it has been happening. He loves the new-found freedom and the fact that he no longer has to carry the burden of his "secret" alone. I love the feeling that it was because of me he is a very happy person. He sends me flowers, makes me breakfast in bed and is an overall angel. I love him/her dearly. Special occasions, like birthdays, Valentine's day, etc., are great, because I have always enjoyed buying for women. Men are hard to buy for. We share such a unique relationship and the pure joy of just having him to love and care for is wonderful. He is very considerate of



my needs, and if I feel "she" is hanging around too much, I always have a green light to ask "her" to go away for awhile.

It has worked out well. Instead of having a relationship which gets into a rut like so many that you see, I have to give her credit for keeping my life interesting. There are so many wonderful surprises!

We have certain rules on things like shaved legs. We pick times of the year when he can "defuzz," but I have control of that, also. I am actually pretty easy on the issue. As much as I may prefer a fuzzy man, I understand his/her needs also. We make a lot of compromises and we communicate a lot. Communicating our feelings often has made things a lot easier.

We have started doing a new thing we both just love. We fill the bathtub up with bubble bath and open a bottle of champagne. It is the time of the year when he defuzzes his legs, so we fill a basket of things to have by the tub and scrub and shave and really have a great time.

Coping with crossdressing can be very hard and frustrating, as I have seen in a couple of wives at a party we went to recently, or you can relax and enjoy the new experience. I can't say it's always easy, and I still do a lot of soul-searching, but I have to say I really love him/her so much more and our life has really become so much more happy, fun, and exciting.

Well, I have rambled on long enough. I wish you both the best of luck and hope some of my perceptions and experiences can help you with your relationship. If you wish, I would love to hear from you and see how you are doing. The bulletin boards were of such great help for me in the first few weeks. I guess you go through a syndrome of "we are the only ones in the world that are like this." If you are aware of the issue, it is amazing how many subtle clues there are around you from people you know or meet.

Like they say, "there are black and white, and all shades of grey between."

Ed. Note: Reprinted from the Delta Chapter Chatter column "Bird On A Wire" by Marla. Names changed to preserve privacy.

Why Tri-Ess?

By Candace Mahne

From time to time, people try to reinvent the wheel. Or, they think Tri-Ess should change its charter and include the whole spectrum of gender expression.

At one point in time, I thought so, too. And at that time, I forgot whence I came. The journey of aloneness was mostly out of fear. It was fear that kept me away so long. And it was Tri-Ess that broke down the barrier of fear.

I'll never forget the terror. And overcoming it, in order to make the phone call. Naomi answered and gently reduced my fears. For me, anonymity was and is very important. Her encouragement led to my "emergence" at Holiday En Femme, in November of 1991.

Tri-Ess has a family oriented atmosphere. That is, it encourages the crossdresser, spouse, significant other, and/or girl friend to attend and join. Tri-Ess supports the crossdresser not only with his "partner, but also with his children. This philosophy was important to me. It made me feel at ease and at "home".

In the beginning, "coming out" and meeting others, just like me, was really important. I hated being alone with no one to talk to all those years. I felt as if I were dropped from a space craft and was an alien, with alien feelings.

Tri-Ess had the same value base I did, and from that base, trust began being comfortable with myself and with others. There was less fear, shame and loneliness.

I must always remember those beginning days and the fears I felt. I didn't need to meet people different from me, but people who were similar. The association with similar people gave me the confidence to later branch out, as Star Trek: The Next Generation says, "To seek out new life forms and to go where no one has gone before."

I like what Nancy Cole has said, "At

first my efforts were quite selfish. I was simply a wanderer, looking for myself and my place. While in pursuit of this self-fulfilling effort, I found myself drawn into the activities and the work of community."

Tri-Ess, with its family orientation, gives us an opportunity to be in "community" with each other and the other Tri-Ess chapters in America. Males, traditionally, tend to be self-oriented. It's the females who have relationships (community).

The Tri-Ess philosophy fosters growth of its members into relationships and into building community. The whole idea is to have a "safe" place to find yourself and begin to help others.

Some believe that one has to "progress," to be all that one can be. For some, this means hormones and eventually surgery. That conclusion may be the journey for some. Others may be oriented to being something more traditional (i.e., a crossdresser) and that's O.K., too.

In my present state, I have neither a wife nor a girl friend, so I am missing out on the "Couples' Club" of Chi Chapter. Relationship-oriented activities take place there. Some day soon, I hope to be a part of that organization. Right now, I don't qualify.

Our founders were wise when they selected our basis and philosophy, aiming at traditional family orientation and values. The subtle implication is that crossdressing fits in. Where else, can a father explore his feminine side and then learn to apply it in family situations? Where else can a husband learn to be in relationship with his wife or significant other, as opposed to in competition? (Relations, after all, are not possessions.)

Let's continue the philosophy and basis of our organization intact. Those whose needs are different will form other organizations. There is certainly room for all.

The Cross Gender Castle

By Carol M.

Ed.Note: This story was originally published in the Alpha Zeta Chapter's Cactus Flower in August, 1991.

The legends say that it appears out of the mist at mysterious times and places at locations known only to a chosen few. It is guarded by gnomes who are sworn to secrecy by a blood oath. Sometimes it appears on a mountain with sharply angled craggy dark rocks which push up through the moist earth. Through the fog a castle appears on the summit. A road, bare and steep, winds up from the bridge to the castle high above. The bridge is guarded by one of the gnomes, who sits on the bridge wall and patiently watches for members of "THE SOCIETY."

When the sun has long since faded from the sky and as twilight spreads over the land, the sounds of beasts of burden can be heard coming closer to the bridge. Many of the travelers come alone, but some come with "companions." The travelers appear out of the mist on their beasts and draw closer to the gnome. The gnome watches closely, but this old fellow has seen this strange procession many times before - the costumes, the colors, the fine silks and satins. Everyone is dressed as if invited to the King's Ball.

Every now and then there is a face that is new to the gnome and he looks with a questioning glance. The traveler leans toward the gnome and whispers a few words. Satisfied with their presence, the gnome lets them pass.

The travelers climb up the mountain, dismount from their beasts, and enter the Great Hall of the castle. In the Great Hall, they greet one another with hugs and signs of affection. They remove their cloaks and in the flickering light of the fireplace and torches, the bright colors of their attire come alive and their jewels glitter in the dancing light. Newcomers are welcomed warmly into the "SOCIETY" and the rules are explained by the "LADIES."

"Rule #1. This is a private community of various tribes of the X-gendered. We keep what we learn of each other in strictest confidence.

"Rule #2. There many rooms in the castle that express the different views of the various tribes. One may visit these rooms as one chooses. There is no penalty for free choice. One may stay where one is comfortable for as long as one wishes.

"Rule #3. One's conduct is to be such that others will feel comfortable, and one must never bring shame to the "SOCIETY."

"Rule #4. One's appearance at general meetings of the "SOCIETY" shall be of a genteel and ladylike nature.

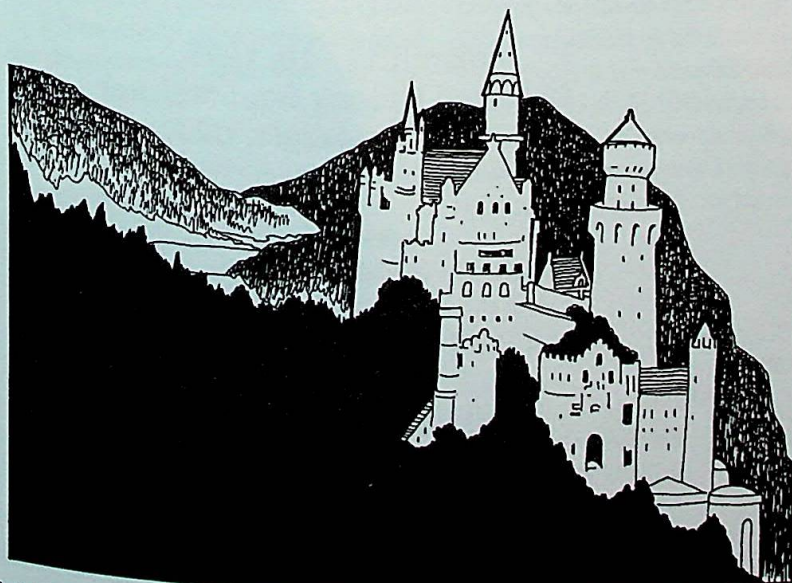
"Rule #5. The work of the "SOCIETY" is to be shared.

The gift of friendship and understanding is offered to all and especially to the neophytes of the "SOCIETY". With this warm welcome the neophytes gladly subscribe to the "SOCIETY" for they now know that their days of hiding in their dark cellars are over.

At the "witching hour" the revelers begin to prepare for their departure. Some change into costumes of common travelers, while others are content to leave as they came. The beasts are mounted in the courtyard and calls of farewell are heard echoing off the castle walls. Soon there remain but a solitary few standing close together sharing a special good-bye.

The center of attention is one sister who is about to embark on a journey that would be a fulfillment of her special dream. She is to pledge her troth to a different tribe in the "SOCIETY." A mixture of sadness and joy is heard in their voices. Sadness to see her leave the tribe, joy for her new adventure.

Soon the time has come for the last of these "travelers" to leave the castle. The gnome guarding the bridge watches as the last of the travelers cross the bridge and disappear back into the mist. When he turns to look at the castle, it is gone. Knowing all is well, he wets his wrinkled finger and pinches out the candle in his old lantern. Suddenly, he too disappears into the misty night whence he came.



The Debt We Owe

By Jeannie C. AZ-3759-C

Alpha-Zeta and Tri-Ess are support groups in addition to serving a social function (frequently referred to as a "cheap party"). So many times, I've heard people say, usually when they are upset about something, that they no longer need a support group. Many of us question why we should belong to Tri-Ess when, for \$35 less, we can get the same (primarily socialization) out of belonging to a local group.

"...personal need [as] one's only criteria for belonging to a support group is...very selfish."

That may very well be true. I, personally, don't need Alpha-Zeta or Tri-Ess anymore. I am now more than comfortable with myself, both as Gene and Jeannie, and can, and do, function just fine in the real world without anyone to hold my hand. The big problem with feeling that personal need is one's only criteria for belonging to a support group is, it's very selfish.

"Ask not what your country can do for you..." - JFK

Too often, I've heard people ask what a support group can do for them. I rarely hear anyone ask what they can do for a support group. This strikes me as sad when you stop to consider most, if not all, of us at one time or another were in need of, and received, help from others.

"...I have a debt that...I'll probably never be able to repay."

A sister brought this point home to me awhile back when I thanked her for help I had received because of her. Her reply was for me to do the same for others, which, in a small way, I've been trying to do. With that simple reply, she made me realize that I have a debt that, considering the sad shape I was in, I'll probably never be able to repay.

About ten years ago, when I first started going out in public, I had to pass or endure ridicule and harassment. Now, due to creeping old age masculinizing my appearance, I get read all the time, yet it rarely results in ridicule or harassment anymore. Why is this? Because sisters before me have blazed the trail already, leaving the world a less hostile place for me to circulate in.

"If we take the...selfish attitude..., who will help others...?"

If everyone were to take an honest, close look at themselves, most, if not all, would realize they also have a debt to repay. Forgive the corny quote, but former President Kennedy summed it up quite nicely when he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." If the people who helped us at one time had taken the attitude of "What can I get?" instead of "What can I give?", there wouldn't have been anyone to have helped us. If we take the same selfish attitude ourselves, who will help others who still desperately need it?

Personally, I intend to support, both financially and with my time, Alpha-Zeta, Tri-Ess, A Rose, etc., as long as they are dedicated to helping others find themselves for what they really are, not what a misinformed, bigoted society has branded them. In that way, I can make a small payment on the enormous debt I have.

What about you all ?



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French Dressing

D'Eon's Story

by Cindy AZ-2817-N

One of the most famous examples of crossgender behavior in history is Le Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont. He seems to have gained notoriety as a spy and was heavily involved with French politics, in addition to being a crossdresser. Some of his history may be found in the Encyclopedia of Espionage by Ronald Seth and the Magazine of Military History, Dec. 1991, by John H. Waller. (Thanks to Notes from the Underground, Ottawa, Canada, for this reference.) But, for all of his political exploits, he was remembered more for his crossdressing than for his political prowess. Havelock Ellis, an English psychologist, (1859-1939), coined the term "eonism" to describe transvestism, thus ensuring d'Eon a permanent place in history.

D'Eon was born in France on October 5, 1728, to a Burgundian aristocratic family. He was given, among other names, those of Genevieve Louise. His full name was Charles Genevieve Louise Auguste Andre Timothee d'Eon de Beaumont, or d'Eon as we now refer to him. It was, perhaps, a mother's unfulfilled wish for a daughter that was the reason for her clothing him as a girl from the ages of 4 to 7. D'Eon's early years were spent amid the decadence of Versailles. He was known as "Le Petit" d'Eon, because of his slight stature and delicate features. In his early manhood he became an excellent

fencer and acquired a vast knowledge of civil and canon law which procured him the degree of Doctor. Because of this background, he was subsequently admitted to the bar.

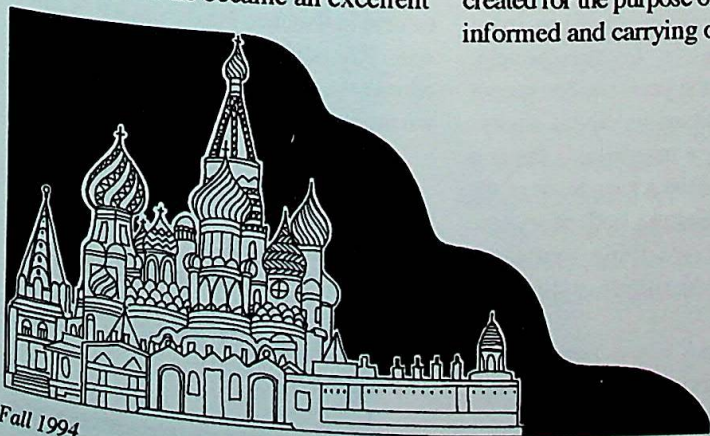


D'Eon is reported to have made his debut into history in woman's garb as the rival of Marquise de Pompadour, the most famous of King Louis XV's mistresses, as a pretty new mistress for the King. When his secret was made known to the King, the latter capitalized on his initial mistake by turning d'Eon into a trusted diplomat. He became one of the first members of "Le Secret du Roi", a super-secret organization created for the purpose of keeping the King informed and carrying out his wishes.

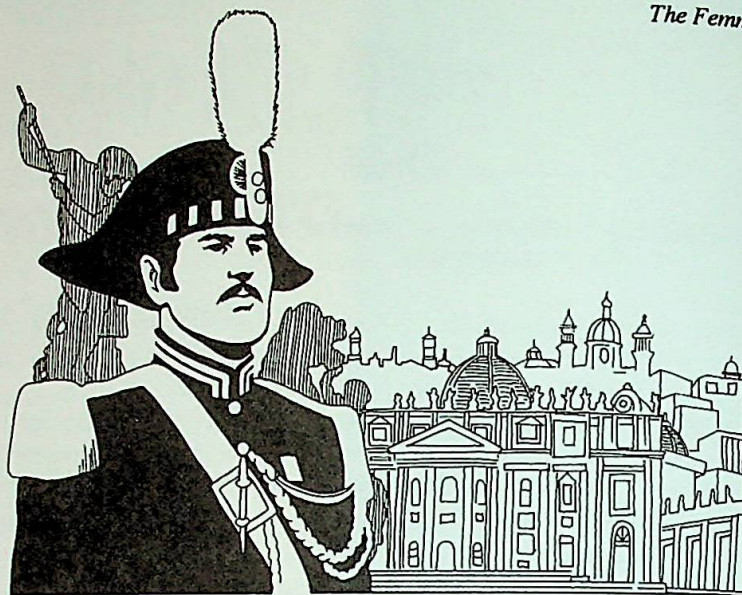
In 1755, d'Eon was dispatched on a mission to the Russian court in St. Petersburg in the guise of a woman. He assumed the identity of the niece of Chevalier Douglass Mackenzie, one of the King's accredited agents. Douglass was in reality a Scottish exile in France pretending to be a French businessman. During his travels to Russia with Douglass, d'Eon took the name of Mademoiselle Lia de Beaumont. They traveled a very circuitous route to Russia, with the intention of d'Eon becoming a lady-in-waiting in the Russian Court.

After arriving in Russia he and Douglass were finally able to make the acquaintance of Chancellor Voronzoff, who then introduced d'Eon to the Russian Empress Elizabeth. D'Eon was then able to personally deliver to Elizabeth a letter from King Louis XV, in which the King asked for the help of Elizabeth to invade England. Elizabeth was so captivated by d'Eon's skills, or by d'Eon himself, for he revealed the disguise when he was sure of success, that she acquiesced to King Louis' plan of invasion.

D'Eon's role as Lia de Beaumont while in the Russian Court was still a harrowing experience. He had to "pass" muster with the Russian Court's real ladies-in-waiting. He had an even more challenging time with the Princess d'Askoff, with whom he shared an apartment. She probably would have fainted to find out that her modest bedmate was actually a man! Within six months, d'Eon was able to obtain from Elizabeth, a letter inviting King Louis to renew relations with Russia, a diplomatic prize of no little magnitude. When d'Eon returned to King Louis' court, he was received with honors. "Le Petit" d'Eon had proven himself a master of the dark arts of espionage and high politics.



The following year d'Eon returned to Russia attired as the brother of Mademoiselle Lia de Beaumont to complete the mission. King Louis was so delighted at d'Eon's success that he granted him a considerable annuity and employed him on other diplomatic missions. During the waning days of the Seven Years War, d'Eon distinguished himself many times in battle and sustained several wounds while leading a charge against enemy forces. This distinguished him as a valiant warrior and served to dispel, at least for a while, some of the vicious rumors about his effeminate ways.



Madame Pompadour's efforts to expose "Le Secret du Roi" may well have been the start of d'Eon's forced crossdressing career. When King Louis XV died in 1774, his successor, Louis XVI, disbanded the now not-so-secret "Le Secret", and d'Eon's pension was rescinded. But, by this time, d'Eon had in his possession many sensitive state documents. This proved to be his "ace in the hole." Through an agent of King Louis XVI, d'Eon was convinced to give up the incriminating papers in return for a life pension, and with the further condition that he give up his "pretense" of being a man and live henceforth as a woman. He was forced to declare himself female, changed from Le Chevalier to La Chevalier, and had doctors produce evidence to support his sex as being female. From then on he was forced to live the rest of his life as a woman - a common crossdresser fantasy come true!

He continued to live as a woman in France for the following 8 years, from 1777 to 1785, becoming very prominent in Paris society. He then went back to England, the country he had so valiantly opposed, and spent the last 25 years of his life en femme. He opened a Salle d'Armes in the London borough of Kensington. There he made a curious career as a swordswoman, teaching and giving public exhibitions. Even though he was weighed down with numerous petticoats, he was rarely bested by anyone who dared challenge him. There was great uncertainty in London society as to whether his true sex was male, or whether the periods in male attire were not, in fact, the periods of impersonation. His identity was the subject of much social gossip, and he silently endured many humiliating remarks from the local populace.

The French Revolution brought ruin to d'Eon. Royal obligations of this era seem to have evaporated as quickly as today's political promises. In any event, d'Eon's pension came to an abrupt end. His debts became so burdensome that he was sent to debtor's prison, where he spent five years.

D'Eon returned to France and died on May 21, 1810 at the age of 82. A number of influential gentlemen stood to gain or lose heavily, as many wagers had been placed as to what his true sex was. To the pious horror of the lady with whom he had shared a house during the last 5 years of his life, the doctor found the body to be that of a fully equipped male! When he died the Chevalier d'Eon had lived forty-eight years as a man and thirty-four years as a woman.

Christine's Corner

FRIENDSHIP

F Fun for life
R Reasoning
I Important
E Enthusiastic
N Never quit
D Do it all
S Special
H Helpful
I Incredible
P Patient

There are so many different things that can be said about having a friend. My best platonic friend and I share so much. We can share ideas on anything from parenting to sports to the gender community. Over the years she has grown with each unique situation. She is always around, and being a true friend, she is a good listener. We share a keen sense of the need to be available. As both of us care about each other, we bring that same concern to include others within the community.

My friend has a tremendous amount of joy for life. She is a positive sign

in this city, where so many people are down and out. I was told by my parents that you could never have too many friends. I believe in that, and hope to pass it on to my son. Friendship is a two way street. Of course, we cannot agree on everything, but we attempt to do the best we can.

I will give all I can to be available for my friends. If you truly believe in your efforts your friends will be on your side. As the Tri-Ess world grows we continue to get new sisters and best friends. This small piece is dedicated to my best friend, Marissia.

Why Gals Feel Secure (and Guys Don't)

(From The Weekly World News)

"Men are basically insecure, restless and ready to take up a challenge while women are stable and don't feel a need to prove themselves. And it all starts in the womb," says psychiatric expert Dr. Walter J. Ong.

Before a baby boy is even born he must battle to establish his masculinity. "The foundation for male insecurity all begins in the womb. He has to fight to be masculine," Dr Ong said. "He is conceived in an environment (the womb) on which he is totally dependent, yet which is partly hostile because it is feminine. "The male embryo has to quickly start secreting his own male hormones. These produce his male bodily characteristics and also offset any possible effect of circulating female hormones (in the womb) that come from his mother. In order to be a man, a male must, in the beginning, have his life dominated by a woman." Quite simply, he spends the rest of his life proving himself - asserting the masculinity he fought so hard for at the outset, and because of this, males are always ready to fight. Contest is the pattern of life."

But, Dr. Ong pointed out that females don't have this restlessness because they didn't assert their femininity in the womb. "Since she is the same sex as the mother, any female hormones circulating in the fetus from the mother do no harm to the embryo, only good," he said. "And the female does not have to do battle throughout her life to assert her femininity. "This is why females are fundamentally stable," he added.



Fall 1994

Full Time Worry

by Jan

Although our organization, the Ladies Knight Out, is a social, fun kind of an organization and not a support group, I find that we naturally offer the support of true friendship among our members. At our parties and outings we, as friends, talk about everything and, not surprisingly, our talk frequently centers around crossdressers and the ups and downs of being one or living with one.

It was at one such outing that the wife of a crossdresser expressed her concern and fears about the direction her husband's crossdressing was leading. It seems that her husband had revealed his dream to some day live full time as a woman. As crossdressers, or as persons in a committed relationship with a crossdresser, we have each either held that dream or heard it expressed by someone close to us. And, for many, that dream is the cause for full time worry.

It is that worry, and the underlying facts and fiction contributing to it, that I wish to address in this article.

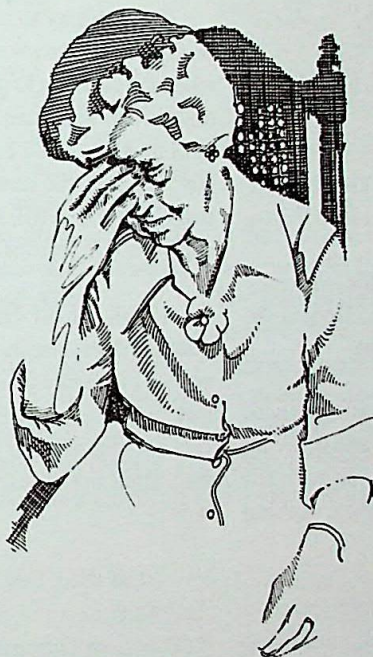
True or false? As soon as a cross dresser reaches retirement age, he will opt to live full time as a woman. False.

It is false for the obvious reason: no two people are alike. Everyone has his or her own reasons for doing things. Like everyone else in the world, we do not live in isolation, and our actions and decisions are not made in a vacuum.

And, it is false given the empirical evidence: not all (not even very many) crossdressers who have retired from active

employment are living full time as women.

So, what then is all the worry about, especially considering how small the chances really are of a crossdresser living full time as a woman? The worry stems from the fact that some crossdressers do, in fact, begin living full time as a woman upon retirement or shortly thereafter and that the crossdresser causing this particular spate of worry is "my" crossdresser.



You can almost hear the wife or girlfriend saying, "I don't care if the chances are small. I'm not concerned with what some other crossdresser does. I'm concerned that right now the most important person — the most important man — in my life wants to live full time as a woman just as soon as he can arrange it."

At the risk of stating the obvious, (and that's exactly what I intend to do)

all the worry in the world will not change the fact that the crossdresser dreams of living full time as a woman and everything changes; nothing stays the same.

Let's address the question of worry and its practical effectiveness as a tool for changing the future. I'll state it simply as I can: worrying about it cannot change it. Worry adds nothing to tomorrow, it only takes away from today. Moreover, a person who worries about something in the future is already suffering from that which she worries about. Remember, when Shakespeare said that the coward dies a thousand deaths, and the brave but one, he was really referring to those who worry needlessly.

NEWS FLASH!!!!

She's doing it again!

Yes, our very own Dr. Peggy Rudd is up to her old tricks!

That's right, she's writing another book! This one will be for "crossdressers and those who love them."

And, once again, she needs your help!

Peggy would appreciate any personal stories - stories of how you have coped with crossdressing in your relationships - your successes and your failures - lessons you learned along the way. Please share what worked for you with the others out there who are struggling.

Please send any pictures you are willing to share as well. Pictures of couples will be particularly welcome.

If you have computer capability, send Peggy your story on disk, Word Perfect 6.0 preferred.

Write Peggy at:

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To belabor the point just a little more - statistically speaking, more than 93% of everything we worry about never happens. (From a study conducted by the American Mental Health Association.) So, worry is really a big waste of precious time.

"Don't tell me that worry doesn't do any good. I know better. The things I worry about don't happen." -Anonymous

"Do not anticipate trouble, or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight." -Benjamin Franklin

Part of the futility of worrying about whether the crossdresser will end up living full time as a woman has to do with the axiom that everything changes; nothing stays the same.

In the future (however long that may be) the world will be different, your living circumstances will be different, your husband will be different, and most importantly, you will be different.

There is no need to discuss (and certainly no need to worry about) your husband living full time as a woman until the circumstances warrant it. Talking about it, beyond the point of letting your feelings be known, will not change anything (except maybe destroy your marriage) for when

the time comes, everything will be different, including you and your feelings.

So, don't try to pre-live this problem. Wait until the question comes up at a time when the decision to go ahead and live full time as a woman can be implemented - until then it's just a crossdresser's dream. Not only that, the chances are pretty good that the question will never really come up at all and will forever remain just a dream.

If, on the off-chance, however, the question does arise in the future, a different you - that future you - will need to make that decision in concert with your husband just as you and he agreed to make all important decisions when you were first wed.

Until then, live today to the fullest. Together, as a couple, enjoy all the fun aspects of crossdressing (and both my wife and I can attest to the fact that there are many different fun aspects to be enjoyed). And, finally, give up that full time worry.

Ed. Note: Jan is the Founder and President of "Ladies Knight Out", a couples-only crossdressers' group located in Southern California, and is happily married to a very special woman. Jan is one of our talented team of contributing writers.

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Be-All-You-Want-To-Be - 1994

Ed. Note: One of the very best events in the gender community is the "Be-All" Weekend. Founded years ago largely by the efforts of that all-time-great party-giver, Naomi of Chi Chapter, Be-All rotates among four Midwestern cities. Be-All '94 was held in Pittsburgh. TransPitt, the hosting organization, did a really fantastic job!! The following account is by Mystie (CO-3727-S).

Pit Burg? PIT BURG?? What in the world ever possessed the "Be All You Want To Be" committee to have their annual event in Pittsburgh, PA? That thought, my other visits to Pit Burg years ago, and the many, many wonderful memories of my two previous Be All Conventions crossed my mind in March, as I read over the 1994 Be All registration flyer. After weighing the fantastic times that I had at the other Be Alls against going to Pit Burg, I decided to get the details on attending. I called United and Brand X airlines and, quite to my surprise, I found that there was a very small window of opportunity to purchase a non-refundable (cut your right arm off if you change it) one time good deal, round trip ticket, Denver to Pittsburgh. So, I committed, bought a United ticket, and began to make plans to attend my third Be All Weekend.

For those of you who haven't attended a national event, the planning is half the fun

but it takes a lot of time. If you are flying in, as I usually do, and don't have the luxury of a car or van and trailer, as many locals have, then you have to be a GOOD planner to survive as your femme self for 4 or 5 days, living out of three suitcases. Before I got into attending crossdressing events, I never really understood why my wife took so much "stuff" on our trips.

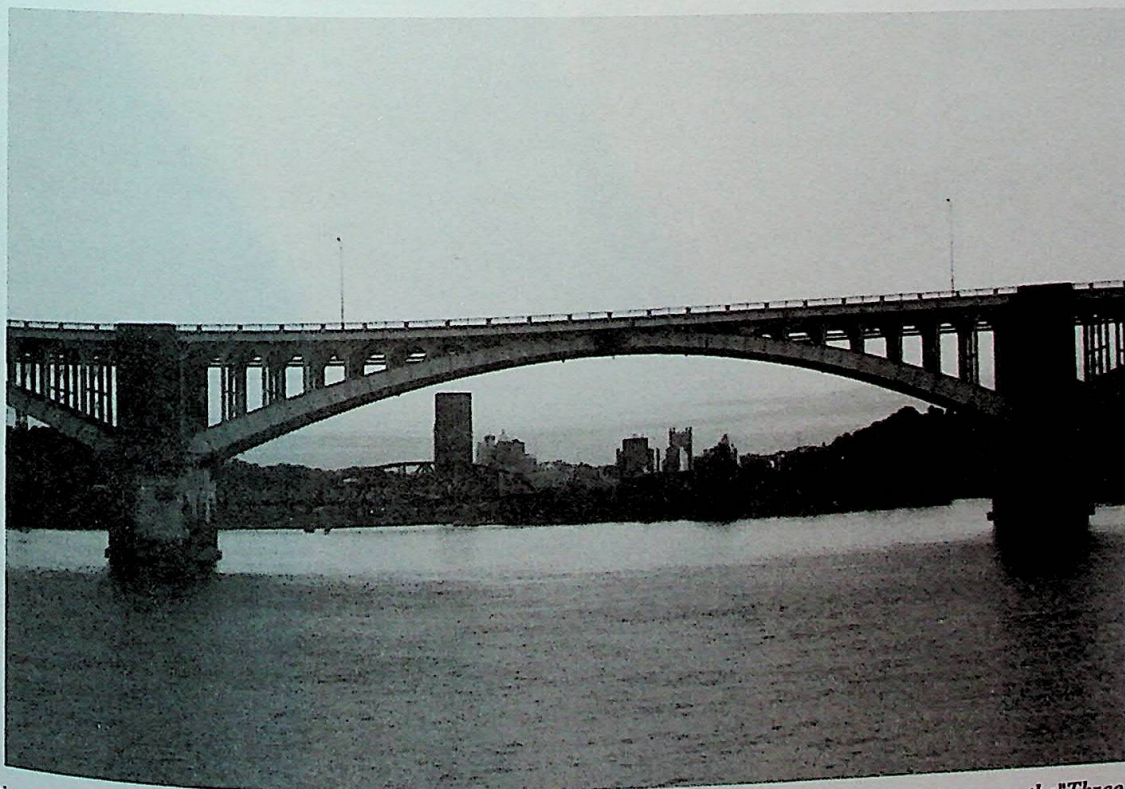
Dresses and gowns have to be coordinated with proper color or matching lingerie and nylons; makeup for morning, afternoon and evening wear; wigs from party to proper; jewelry, not too much, but, heaven forbid, not too little; and THE SHOES to match, enhance and, of course, accentuate those legs and skirts.

The weeks flew past and suddenly there I was departing the Denver Stapleton Airport early on the morning of June 8 for Be All. On the climb out from Denver, I began to pass through the "pink cloud", a

mental transition from my male self to my femme self.

On arrival, I noticed that the Pittsburgh Airport was a beautiful miniature version of one concourse of the Denver International Airport (DIA), except it was open and everything worked. I got my rental car and departed for Mars, PA, a Pittsburgh blurb, with three bags of "stuff" and good case of high anticipation. The countryside sure didn't look like the Pit Burg that I remembered. It was beautiful!!

After a forty-five minute drive I arrived at the Sheraton Hotel. It was an impressive structure. The lobby, restaurant and casual bar were done in the open motif with a towering five-floor-high ceiling. A large enclosed dance lounge and bar faced two six floor quadrants of well furnished, first class rooms. Two glass elevators provided access to these floors. Across from the entrance was a third quadrant of large, well



The River Cruise provided this sunset view of the Pittsburgh skyline, framed by one of many bridges over the "Three Rivers." Fall 1994

appointed banquet and meeting areas. The lobby was dominated by an attractive fountain and, believe it or not, TWO LARGE MIRRORED WALLS. Undoubtedly, by Sunday noon, when Be All ended, most, if not all, the silver on those mirrors would be worn away by the crossdressers posing thousands of times enroute to activities. It appeared that the hotel was sold out, and, other than us, filled with "ordinary people". The convention committee had done a great job in obtaining a first class facility at a very reasonable room rate of \$66.00!

After checking in and registering with the Be All Staff, I "exploded" my three suitcases into my room on the fourth floor. That evening the scheduled icebreaker was a Pig Roast and Patio Pool Party at 6 PM.

I had done some preliminary nail, hair and fashion preparation before leaving home and was able to make the party on time. The setting was a beautiful area overlooking a picturesque valley and hill area. (We have mountains in Colorado; they have hills in Pittsburgh.)

The party was well attended and a few of the girls did go swimming. Unfortunately, most did not. As a size 16 lady, I personally believe that a bounty should be put on those petite, naturally well proportioned, very passable, crossdressers who look fantastic in swimwear. A great time was enjoyed by all, and then we adjourned to the bar and lounge for country dancing and conversation.



Jane Ellen Fairfax at the Tri-Ess/ S.P.I.C.E. information table.



Be-All founder Naomi presents an award at the Saturday Night Banquet.

The hotel had country line dancing lessons scheduled for both Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The local cowboys and cowgirls were somewhat taken aback by our presence at first, but there were no problems and things went well. Most of the girls turned into pumpkins by 1 AM and departed to their rooms to prepare for Thursday.

The scheduled activities throughout the convention were well thought out and appropriately scheduled for maximum participation and exposure by all attendees. Obviously, the Be All Staff had done their homework well and were presenting an outstanding event geared to the interests and needs of all in attendance.

The list of speakers and seminar leaders was a registry of the Big Wigs, and the Big Wigs with real hair, in the community. I.F.G.E. was well represented by Merissa Sherrill Lynn, Yvonne Cook-Riley, Dr. Shelia Kirk, Eve Burchert, Holly Cross and Linda Buten. Jane Ellen and Frances Fairfax represented Tri Ess. The Grand Ladies of Be All, Naomi and Rachel Owen, were present. Head problems and games were taken care of by Dr. Richard Doctor, Adrienne Walker and others. The "How To Do It To/For Yourself" area was covered, in detail, by Alison Laing, Renee Edgerton, Janet and Charlotte Jackson, and Jo Ann Roberts. Legal rights and problems for the community and individuals were presented by Elise De Long. Dr. Eugene Schrang (MD) and Dr. Shiela Kirk (MD) went over sexual reassignment surgery and hormones. Jan Sandretti handled the Significant Others' Programs throughout the convention.

Kansas City resident Renee Edgerton presented one of the most interesting and informative programs that I have ever attended. In her other life, Renee is a tall (6'4") very masculine male. She began her presentation as her male self complete

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The Femme Mirror with beard and deep voice. During the following three hours, she transformed herself, from the skin out, on stage, into a complete, passable and very feminine lady with a voice to match. Throughout the presentation numerous pointers and tips were given on hair, makeup, fashion, demeanor and illusion for the tall crossdresser and others. This is a MUST SEE if you ever have the opportunity!

A Dinner Boat Cruise on the Three Rivers of Pittsburgh was the Thursday evening activity. The scenery was fabulous! I just could not believe the old PIT Burg that I remembered had been transformed into the beautiful and elegant city of Pittsburgh. It was one of the most picturesque cruises that I have ever gone on. Pittsburgh is also a MUST SEE if you have the opportunity.

Following a savory buffet dinner, a live band provided music for dancing and enjoyment. On return to the hotel, about 11 PM, many of the girls enjoyed the bar and lounge till the wee hours of the morning. Others went on tours of "accepting" bars in the Pittsburgh area.

The Thursday luncheon speaker was Dr. Shiela Kirk, who went over her experiences in, and coping with, her "new"

life. Dr. Richard Doctor spoke at the Friday luncheon and brought us up to date on the damage done by the California earthquake to his work place and to his research project on the gender community.

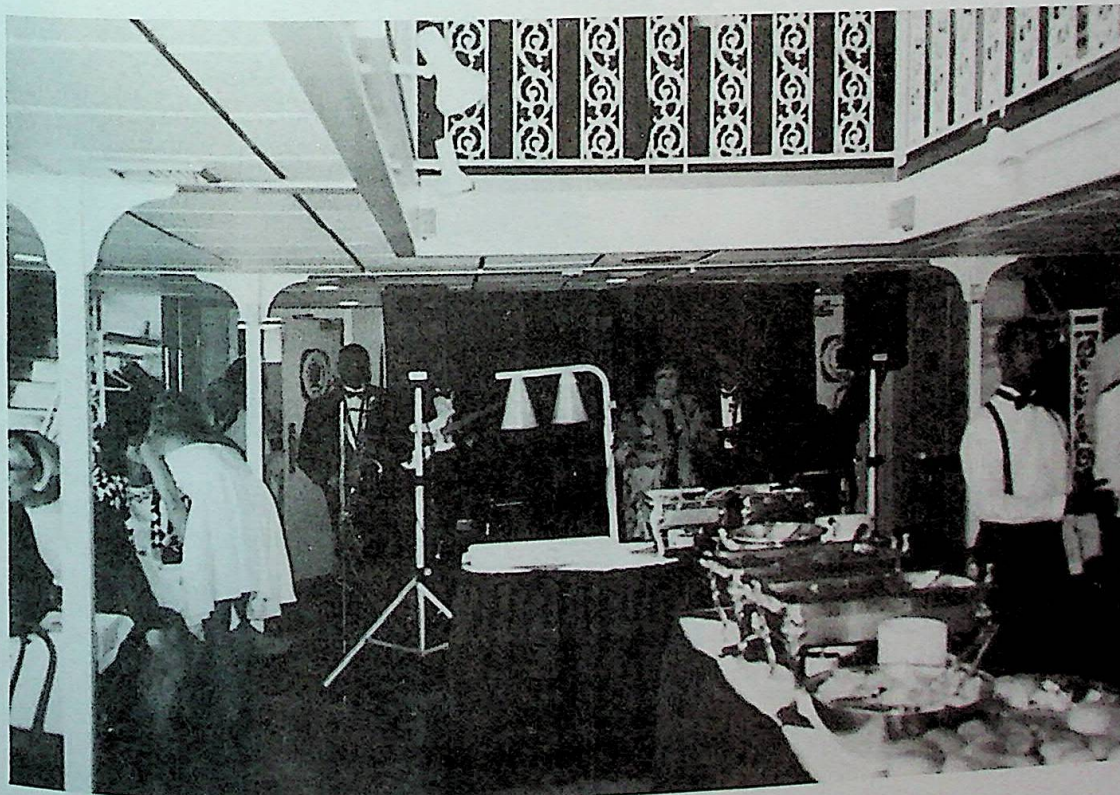
Following a delicious dinner Friday evening a Monte Carlo and Masquerade Party was held. Prizes for the winners were provided by the vendors at the convention. A number of the girls wore costumes that ranged from simple to exotic. Most, however, preferred to wear that frilly feminine frock that they had been saving all year for just "this" event. After our scheduled activities ended, many of the girls went dancing in the lounge or continued the bar tours in the downtown area.

The vendor support at The Be All is always great! There were twenty three vendors attending this year, with a large number from the local area. The most interesting of these were representatives of a Lens Crafters Outlet. Their Opticians were able to duplicate eyeglass prescriptions and fit the girls with femme frames one day and deliver the finished glasses the next day. What a great service for those who want or need glasses but cannot or will not go to a store to be fitted while dressed as their femme self!

Several of the nationally known vendors attended also: Creative Design Services (Jo Ann Roberts); I.F.G.E. Bookstore (I.F.G.E. Staff); Shoe Express (Ann West); Wigs by Rachel (Rachel Owen); Fashion Fantasy (Manassas VA); and those great and long time friends of the community The Jim Bridges Boutique (Jim Bridges and Anthony).

The Saturday luncheon featured a marvelous Fashion Show by Kathy's Kloset, a local boutique that handles off-the-rack and custom-made fashions for the community. The formals, dresses and casual outfits were modeled by the Be All Girls and were just darling!

An elegant formal banquet on Saturday evening followed an actual wedding between two Be All participants. The bride wore a lovely full length gown with flowing train. The groom was attired in a black tuxedo complete with a hat holding a large white bow and long ribbon down the back. S(he) was a beautiful bride and (s)he a handsome groom. They were accompanied in the wedding procession by nine stunning maids and maidens who were also dressed as brides. It was a wonderful ceremony to watch and participate in.



Buffet line and Show Band aboard the River Cruise boat.



We kid you not! This is just one small section of the vendor area!

Following the banquet, we were entertained by the Greater Pittsburgh Gay Men's Chorus. Their repertoire was wonderful. A few special selections were mixed with a large number of familiar favorites for everyone's enjoyment. Following their performance, we were further entertained by a master puppeteer. He and his entourage of characters had us falling out of our chairs. The evening ended late, but some of the girls refused to give up on the fun and fantasy and closed the bar(s) and lounge(s) down around 3 AM.

The Sunday Morning Brunch ended a marvelous convention and was attended by many as their male selves. So, there were lots of questions, such as, "Are you Fran? REALLY? I'm Mystie." Although I hated it, I departed that afternoon. I re-entered the "pink cloud" somewhere over Kansas and came out of it just as we touched down in Denver. I had just experienced another fantastic and memorable event!!!!



The Renaissance Chorus of Pittsburgh. They sang wonderfully well, despite the over-amplified wedding reception on the other side of the ballroom partition!

The programming was just right; the people were great; the vendors were plentiful, well stocked and helpful; and the food was delicious! The Be All, in my opinion, has always been a five star event. The Be All - '94 was a Premier Five Star Attraction.

YOU SHOULD PLAN TO GO NEXT YEAR!!!!

A Be-All Wedding Gallery

A Be-All "first" this year was an actual wedding, with the principals, Jamie and Judy, crossdressed, and a bevy of lovely bridesmaids in white bridal dresses. The pictures on these pages don't begin to capture the elegance and joy of the occasion.



(Above) The bridal party. (Clockwise) flower girls and bridesmaids.





Nancy Ann, you look radiant!



Be-All 94 Director Jaime M. extends "Best Wishes" to the happy couple.



More bridesmaids!



Puppeter and friend close out the evening's festivities.

"Who else can say they had a puppeter and a 90-voice chorus at their reception? Thank you, Be-All!" - Jamie & Judy

Fun Things To Do

In A Committed Relationship Involving A Crossdresser

(edited by Jan)

Ed.Note: This article was originally presented at the 1993 Holiday En Femme. Jan is a member of Alpha Chapter of Tri-Ess and is one of the founders of Ladies Knight Out, a couples-only group in the Los Angeles area.

Preface

We, the members of Ladies Knight Out, are fully aware of the difficulties of any committed relationship, and of the possibility that in a relationship involving a crossdresser the difficulties may even be greater. Nevertheless, we choose to focus our thoughts, emotions and efforts on the positive aspects of being or living with a crossdresser — the fun aspects — realizing that everybody else will be sure to remind us of the negatives. With that in mind, let's have some fun with who and what we are. Especially, let's have fun with that wonderfully unique person with whom we have chosen to live our lives.

Most of the items in the list that follows came from brain-storming sessions that the Ladies Knight Out Board held recently. At those meetings were four couples, representing the entire seven person board. Three of the board members are wives. I preface this listing with that tidbit of information so you would know that what you're about to read did not materialize from the fertile brains of some guys sitting around in dresses and dreaming.

And now for the list...

1. Share some of your clothes with your partner. Dress sizes aren't the same? How about your panty hose or trouser socks or bra size? My wife and I are not the same size, yet she has borrowed panty hose and trouser socks from me and I have borrowed a bra and a night gown from her. I get a warm fuzzy feeling inside whenever she borrows clothing from me.

2. Share your makeup. Different tastes and different needs? True, but how about mascara and eye liner and blush and even lipstick? These are all items that she has borrowed from me and I from her. It gives us a renewed feeling of closeness to share these simple items.

3. Go out to dinner together. She loves to dine out and he just loves to go out, so both get what they want. Pick an upscale restaurant in a good neighborhood reasonably far away from your normal stomping grounds. Upscale people are better behaved and won't make rude comments or stare unduly long. Upscale neighborhoods are safer. Work together so that each looks her best and no one will give you any grief even if the illusion is not perfect.

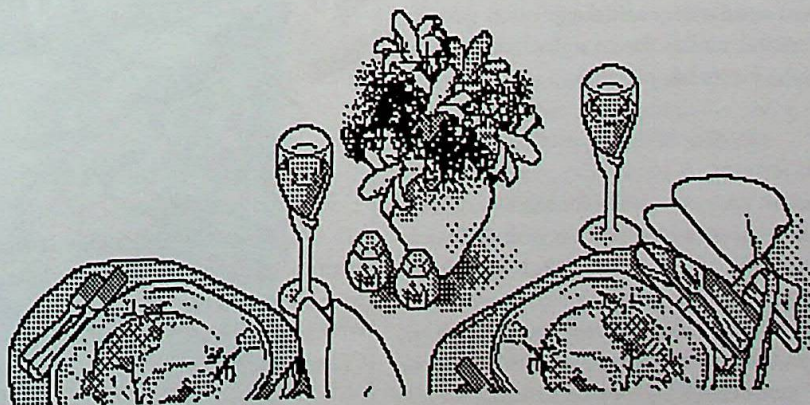
4. A crossdresser loves to do just about anything as long as she can be dressed while doing it. So, wives and lovers, take advantage of this and put her to work.

Better yet, do the work together. Vacuuming and dusting and mopping are right up her alley when she's dressed as a she.

5. A crossdresser is typically more romantic and more inclined to view the softer, gentler side of life in a good light. Take advantage of this predisposition for the feminine and suggest a warm, fragrant and bubbly bath together. You won't hear her scoff at the idea of pampering herself, and taking a perfumed and bubbly bath with someone you love is definitely on my list of fun things to do.

6. It may not be ladylike to talk about sex or making love (although in the right setting it certainly is) but love making with a crossdresser does have its certain advantages. For instance, it no longer matters who's on top — the typical male ego doesn't play a role in this game of love.

7. Perhaps the biggest benefit to being in a committed relationship with a crossdresser is the vastly increased opportunities to be pampered by the one you love and, equally importantly, to pamper the one you love. A crossdresser, more so than the average male, yearns to be pampered and understands the importance of pampering. One intimate, though simple way, to express your love and consideration is to give your partner a pedicure, including polishing the nails. There are not many couples in the world who polish each other's toes.





8. Now here's one that's sure to get you to sit up and take notice. **Shopping.** You've all heard the tales of woe by wives who cannot drag their husbands away from the television and that ball game to go shopping with them. Well, ladies, I know of few activities that interest a crossdresser more than to go shopping for feminine "anythings". Even if he's not shopping for himself, the lure of the feminine is strong. Shopping is a legitimate way to immerse oneself in that world and it affords superb opportunities to learn about fashion, taste and quality. Need I say more? Go shopping together and you'll have more to talk about. You don't even need to buy anything.

However, if the wife should find herself buying clothing, she will find that her crossdressing partner will not only be more likely to be understanding and accepting but will also be acutely interested in the actual purchases. The crossdresser will notice and appreciate what you buy. You can't say that about most male partners.

9. Although nothing I write here can be universally applied, just as no two people are alike, the very nature of a crossdresser tends to make her more willing to try to understand, to try to communicate. This heightened level of tolerance and need to communicate with genetic females makes the crossdresser a potentially better life partner.

10. One of the easiest things to share is jewelry. With jewelry, you can really make your money do double duty. This is also one area in which the genetic female can offer advice to her partner with almost no chance of offending her. Any advice would be welcome, and you have an opportunity to try out new ideas on a willing "guinea pig".

11. Remember the last time you were out to dinner with your partner and needed to go to the powder room? And there was no one to ask to accompany you? Well, ladies, you now have someone.

12. Because of that which makes me a crossdresser, I find that I am much more aware of the condition of my hands and, in particular, my nails. I enjoy letting them grow long and keeping them shapely. I particularly enjoy polishing them whenever I have the opportunity and the time. From this personal enjoyment has grown the added pleasure of **giving my wife manicures** and, naturally, she enjoys the personal attention she receives as a result. When we first began doing this, she told me that she enjoyed painting my toes because of the pure delight I expressed that she would do this for me. Such a little thing to bring so much happiness!

13. One of our sisters loves hair bows. She is never seen in public without one and we all suspect that she even wears them to bed. I won't mention names, but her initials are Tammi. She volunteered this idea for fun: if you **share your hair bows** with your partner, and she with you, then you both have more hair bows from which to choose and you are both better off than before. Sounds like a good recipe for life.



14. Now here's a fun play on words... when your partner is a crossdresser, you have a much wider choice when deciding which TV to watch or, better yet, which CD to play!?!

The Femme Mirror
15. Because of crossdressers' adulation of women, they tend to treat them with more respect. More of **the golden rule** applies here than, perhaps, in any other committed relationship. The crossdresser treats her partner in the way she would like to be treated ... as a woman deserves.

16. Following on from the previous item, the cross dresser also tends to be **more in tune with a woman's emotional needs and more tolerant of her emotional swings.** Perhaps this is because, to a limited degree, the cross dresser experiences similar emotions and emotional swings and, as a result, understands her and empathizes with her better than the average macho male might. My wife tells me that it's a good thing that PMS doesn't strike us both at the same time.

17. **Speaking of macho males, the crossdresser is not one.** And, one of the stereotypical aspects of macho males is the fact that they are very threatening to many women. Again, the cross dresser is not.

18. One thing that has happened with us (and incidentally one of the prime reasons for founding Ladies Knight Out) is that we find ourselves **socializing with quite a few other crossdressing couples in non-crossdressing situations.** We get to meet and then know these other couples in the typical range of crossdressing events and then, because most crossdressing couples are so very very nice, we become friends. Through this friendship, we naturally find ourselves doing all kinds of things together. Before this happened to us, though, we knew and socialized with virtually no other couples — I had nothing in common with the typical male.

19. If you allow it to, **making love to a crossdresser** can certainly add spice to your sex life. It's all in how you handle it and, of course, it has a lot to do with your own self esteem. However, all that aside, this can certainly add variety and a dash of spice to those private moments together.

20. If other crossdressers are anything like the one married to my wife, then leaving the toilet seat up is not a problem where they live. And, neither is peeing on the toilet seat or on the floor. Hey! we just want you to see the whole picture.

21. How many times have you heard or seen the old cliché of the husband waiting impatiently for his wife to get ready to go out? Not only does the crossdresser understand why it takes so long for a woman to get ready and is more tolerant of it, it is now quite often the woman who is waiting for her crossdressing partner to get ready.

22. Depending upon the stage and status of your relationship and upon the point in the spectrum where the crossdresser is, it can be quite a lot of fun to go out as girls and get facials, perms, manicures and pedicures. We know of couples where this is a regular and fun part of their relationship.

23. Let's face it girls, crossdressers are very narcissistic and when we're not looking at ourselves in the mirror, we looking at ourselves in photographs. And the best photograph ever taken of me was by one of those glamour photography places that have sprung up everywhere. Several of the couples have had the glamour photography done, sharing what has to be a unique experience... to have someone else apply your makeup and do your hair and generally fuss about you telling you how beautiful you really are and then,

voila!, providing photographic proof of what they said. I highly recommend this for everyone — it's a great tonic for sagging egos.

24. On a more serious note, sharing something as intense and secret as this can greatly strengthen a relationship. When a crossdresser reveals this most secret and important part of his being to his life's partner, he is at his most vulnerable. He has given her a tremendous amount of power over him, to be used for good or harm. He must trust her; he must love her. She, on the other hand, in accepting this power, must find the strength not to use it for harm and, in her nature as a woman, use it to nurture. It is in this giving and receiving

of tremendous power, coupled with love to guide it, that both grow in their capacity to share and to love.

And with that, I will end this dialog on the fun things to do in a committed relationship with a crossdresser.

Oh yes! To keep things in balance, there are some drawbacks...

- * not enough closet space
- * extra suitcases for travel
- * need for two sinks in bathroom
- * inability to get him to buy "boy" clothes
- ... but then, again, nothing's perfect.*

* except my wife!



The Lion King

By Jeannie C. AZ-3759-C

I have seen the new Disney movie, "The Lion King", both in drab and en femme. The special effects in it weren't as prolific and the humor wasn't non-stop as in "Aladdin", but then, Robin Williams wouldn't have fit in as well here. EXCEPT, maybe, for one little scene I loved.

Simba, the young lion, wanted Timon, the meerkat, to create a diversion. Timon's reply was something like, "So what do you want me to do; dress in drag and do the hula?" In the next scene, he's crossdressed, doing the hula. That gag alone was worth the three dollar admission!



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"Tomboys"

"Tomboys" is from the *Arizona Republic*, Aug. 9, 1994. It and the "Editorial Comments" are reprinted from Sept. '94 *Cactus Flower*, the newsletter of Alpha Zeta Chapter.

Ever since she was a little girl, Maria Rosas wanted to grow up and have her own little girl, a daughter she could dress in ribbons and ruffles and pink dresses. Five years ago, Maria finally got her wish. But Viviana isn't quite the little princess her mother planned on. She hasn't worn dresses (pink or any other color) since she was 3, pleading that they itched or "felt bad." Her favorite clothes are T-shirts, jeans and shoes made for boys, and although she used to have "hair down to her butt," as her mother describes it, she recently got it cut, like a boy.

Viviana is the classic tomboy, one of several dozen 4 to 8 year old girls participating in a study at Northwestern University's Family Studies Laboratory conducted by assistant psychologist professor Michael Bailey and Sherry Berenbaum, an associate professor at the Chicago Medical School. "Tomboys by definition behave in ways that are characteristic of the opposite sex, so they're a fascinating group to study," Bailey said. "At this point there are two competing ideas as to why they don't act like other girls. There may be something biologically different about them, or they may be socialized differently."

How, then to explain Melissa Sherman? The 5-year-old dresses like a boy, loves sports, doesn't play with traditional girl toys and often wishes she were a boy. But Melissa has an identical twin, Rachel, who is as "girlish" as they come.



But society isn't as uncomfortable with little girls who behave like boys as it seems to be with little boys who behave like girls. "Feminine behavior in young males is usually stifled and discouraged, but tomboy behavior is tolerated and sometimes even encouraged," observed Bailey, who is particularly interested in the development of sexual orientation. There seem to be more tomboys than there are boys who are feminine, but statistics show there are fewer lesbians than gay men. Bailey's hunch is that although young girls with masculine traits probably have an increased likelihood of becoming lesbian or bi-sexual women, it's not nearly as likely a possibility as that of feminine boys becoming gay men.



Some girls who have spent their first decade as tomboys take a sharp turn at the gender crossroads when they hit puberty. According to Berenbaum, "Sex-differential socialization becomes absolutely crucial at adolescence, and many of these girls turn toward more feminine interests about that time. Said Bailey, "We know pretty much what a tomboy is like at 8, but we'd love to be able to follow these girls and see how they are at 20 or 30."

Editorial Comment to "Tomboys" by Cindy N. AZ-2817-N

Wow! talk about fertile ground for comment! Why is it cute to be a tomboy, but you're a sicko perverted fag sissy if you like to wear dresses? Why are "tomboys" such a fascinating group to study? Why not study the "sissies" too? If any of us had been allowed to live out our fantasies as little girls, how many of us would have "taken a sharp turn at the gender crossroads?" Is it possible we could have fulfilled all of our desires earlier in life if we had been allowed to play with dolls and help mommy with the household chores instead of being expected to play in Little League? If we had been allowed our frilly frocks and Mary Jane shoes, would we still have these strong crossdressing desires later in life?



They also made the statement that there are fewer lesbians than gay men. I question this. Could it be that gay men are just more visible? Possibly, because when two women touch each other in public, it is acceptable. Women can kiss each other, hug each other, dance together, even walk down the street holding hands, and nothing is thought to be out of line. But, let men do the same thing and they are immediately labeled as queers and faggots.

It appears to me that this "report" is full of flawed data. Perhaps we should invite the researchers to several of our functions. Maybe then they can get a more accurate view of what transgenderism is all about.

Jeannie Does San Diego

By Jeannie C. AZ-3759-C

Normally, I don't write about my little excursions because so many similar articles I have read come across like fairy tales (no pun intended). However, my recent trip en femme to San Diego had some special moments for me. I just have to share.

Gene stayed home for this trip. The only male items I had were my razor, ID, and medication. I left my new home in Tempe en femme (it's SO nice to now have a place to change whenever I want without being a pain in the tushie to my friends) on a Wednesday and drove to the Motel 6 in El Cajon. The trip to El Cajon was generally uneventful. I stopped at a Circle K in Gila Bend and gassed up in Yuma (and made the dreaded "pit stop").

On the way. I was a little concerned what would happen when I checked into the motel, because the only ID I have is Gene's and I had reserved my room in Gene's name, using Gene's Visa. One time when I did this in Phoenix, the two young ladies who checked me in were momentarily shocked, but recovered nicely and actually got a kick out of it. I had no idea how they would react in California. Silly me! The young lady who checked me in didn't bat an ey. It was business as usual.

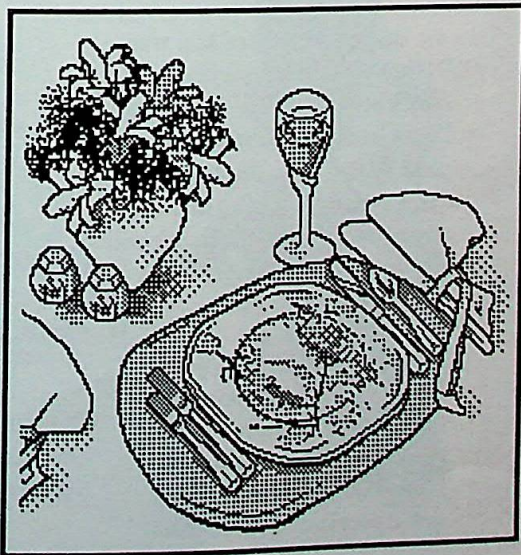
I had supper that evening at the Marie Callender's next door to the motel. Again, nobody batted an eye. The next morning, I ate breakfast at a nearby Denny's, then went over to the San Diego Zoo in time for the gates to open at 9 AM. I took the bus tour through the zoo, then wandered around the place.

At one cage, a woman standing next to me asked me if I thought I had heard the bird in the cage say "Goodbye." As it turned out, we had heard the bird "talk," and soon there were about four of us women, some with little kids,



talking to the bird and each other. It is always such a wonderful feeling when I'm accepted as the woman I feel I am at the time. I doubt I fooled all, if any, of them, which made it even more special.

Later in the day, I took the aerial tramway across the zoo. It's bad enough I'm slightly acrophobic, but I had to share the car I was in with two men, and one just HAD to point out we were in car number 13. That started a very pleasant conversation between the three of us about the zoo, etc.



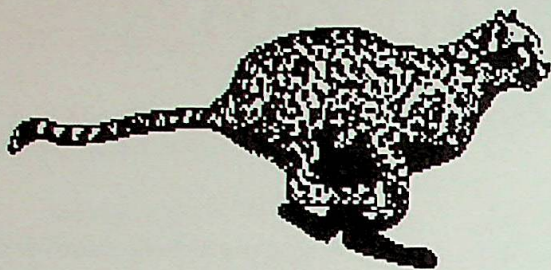
The high point of the day came when I was at one of the wild animal shows. They asked for a volunteer from the audience who had some perfume. Guess who was selected? I handed my camera to a woman on the front row, and asked her to take some pictures. I had to put some of my perfume on a little platform that was part of a coatimundi's "territory," then wait for him to do his thing, hide some food for him, etc. All of this was in front of a crowd of about 2 million people (actually, 200 is probably more accurate). I should have had someone else take my camera. I got only one not-too-spectacular picture.

The entire day and night I was constantly interfacing with people, all of whom were very pleasant and totally nonplussed by my presence. When I was having a little caricature done, the only comments I heard from the crowd were things like, "Oh, he's even getting her glasses" (I keep them perched on top of my head). Notice they said, "Her"?

I left the zoo about 3 PM to go back to my motel room to freshen up, rest a bit and take care of the ubiquitous need for a "pit stop." Then I went back at 6 PM to catch the zoo at night, including a laser show. It wasn't until 9:30 PM that I left for the evening. Most of the day, I forgot I was a genetic male.

Friday, I went to Sea World after having breakfast at Denny's again. I got to Sea World just as the gates opened at 9 AM. I didn't leave that place until 10:30 PM! People seemed even friendlier than the day before. I spent a large part of the day talking to people about what was going on while waiting in lines for shows to start. And yes I had to make my pit stops on the grounds.

Saturday was interesting. After breakfast at Denny's again (by this time, the staff was treating me like a "regular," and the manager would go out of his way to personally seat me), I started to go the



San Diego Wild Animal Park. While getting onto the freeway, I got rear-ended. The only thoughts that went through my mind were, "Not again!" (This is third time Pepe, my poor little truck, has been hit since I got him a year ago) and, "How bad is it?" Well, it turns out the damage to Pepe was very minimal, although the clown who hit me tore up his front end something awful! Well, I didn't feel like messing around with out-of-state insurance agents when I was there to have fun. After I had talked to the idiot who hit me, I decided I just wasn't going to let this ruin my day. I told the guy I was going to let it slide, got back into Pepe, and took off. It wasn't until 28 miles later it dawned on me that the only ID I had was Gene's. It also dawned on me the whole time I was talking to the moron, he kept calling me "Ma'am." Maybe he really wasn't such a bad guy after all (or just myopic).



At the Wild Animal Park, I took the monorail tour first thing. I shared a seat with a woman and her four young boys. We talked the whole time. The boys crowded around me for a better view. Again, as at the Zoo and Sea World, everyone was very friendly. The place was lousy with little kids, but I didn't see one stare at me.

I pretty much had my fill of the park by 3 PM., so I went back to my room to freshen up, then decided to explore El Cajon a little. I drove by a strip mall and saw a little plus size store I just had to check out. I went in and had just started to look

around when a young lady in her early twenties who was running the store noticed me. Well, she just had a fit. She simply loved the little sun dress I had on and wanted to know where I got it (would you believe she thought it would make a nice wedding dress?). We wound up talking for over half an hour. After she told me where I could find a theater, I went there to check out the show times, then went to a mall to browse around. I was in Jean Nicole when another young lady in her early twenties blurted out she had a dress just like mine and it was her favorite. We chatted with each other for a while trying on stuff. After I left the mall, I took in a movie, had a late supper at Marie Callender's, then turned in.

Sunday, I checked out and had my last breakfast at the Denny's in El Cajon. The only attention I seemed to attract came

from the manager. I noticed him walking by my booth several times trying to sneak a good look at my cleavage (Men, really!). Once I got back to Phoenix, I called my girlfriend (yes, I've been dating one of those real genetic females) to see if she wanted to have supper with me. We met at Ed Debevic's and got caught up on what each other had been up to.

Monday, I spoke on a panel with Dagny, Louise, and Donna for Dr. Sheila Friedeman's seminar at ASU West, then spent the rest of the day en femme grocery shopping, taking in a couple of movies. Alas,

all good things must come to an end and reality prevail. I had been en femme six days (seven, if you count the fact I sleep en femme now), so you would think I had gotten my fill by then. WRONG! I actually cried when I unglued my nails, even though they were the biggest pain in the tush because I kept breaking them. The next day, I went back to work as Gene. Until Jeannie got back out Friday night, I felt like an F to M crossdresser.



I have no desire to go through the three to four hours of work it takes to get Jeannie presentable every morning for the rest of my life. I have grown quite attached to certain male features I have (although I wouldn't miss my beard, body hair, and enlarged prostate!). I also enjoy certain male activities, such as taking out the young lady I've been dating and treating her like the lady she is. Then there is the reality of earning a living. So don't even think of taking up a collection to send me to Trinidad. (You may take up a collection just for the heck of it, though!). Still, that one week en femme out in the real world was an experience I won't be soon forget! I can't wait until I get another chance to do it again!



For over twenty years, Executive Director, Carol Beecroft, had wanted what she called at that time, some sort of a Couples Auxiliary. This would be a social organization where couples could engage in many social activities.

The genesis of this idea started in the late 40's and early 50's. At that time Carol had many friends who were SHRINERS — Carol even played in their convention band at the Atlantic City activities. The other members, who were all 33rd degree Masons, always told Carol that the SHRINERS was the "Playground" of the Masons. And did they play !!! Carol let this sink in and was impressed with the difference between the Masons and their Social organizations — the SHRINE.

When Carol started Mamselle Sorority in 1971 (after being the Alpha chapter President of FPE) Carol realized that such a social organization was needed in Mamselle. Thus, Carol notified the three chapters in Los Angeles of her intention to start a Couples Group. And so in a short time, a number of Couples would meet on a Sunday afternoon in the LA area. Unfortunately, these were the days when "understanding" wives were, indeed, few and far apart. And so the social organization for couples died for lack of ENOUGH couples.

However, Carol never forgot her "dream" and even tried to start such an organization in the early 80's with Gloria Ann of Maryland assisting her. There were still not enough couples and the idea never got very far. However, in the last several years a significant number of couples have joined Tri-Ess and Carol now felt that THIS WAS THE TIME to get a couples organization started and to make it a success.

At the recent Tri-Ess Board Of Directors meeting in Memphis, Carol submitted a proposal (work-

NATIONAL COUPLES GROUP FORMING

Coordinating Council To Lead The Group

ed out between her and Jane Fairfax) and that proposal was accepted by the Board.

The PROPOSAL stated: "It is proposed that Tri-Ess establish a new Department Of Couples Activities and Support (DCAS). This department, which will be an integral part of Tri-Ess, will have a primarily social orientation with a significant support aspect. It is our intent to provide sufficient flexibility in the management of this department so that non-Tri-Ess couples can participate in at least some of the programs."

The PURPOSE stated: "The purpose of the Department of Couples Activities and Support will be primarily to provide many social activities for its members on a local, regional and nationwide basis. It is most important that these activities should promote friendships between couples, and that wives should play as prominent a part as husbands . . . The Department Of Couples Activities and Support will be directed by a Coordinating Council comprised of ten couples..."

So, as Carol says, "Get ready for some great fun!" We'll give you more information as time goes on.



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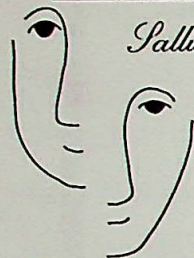
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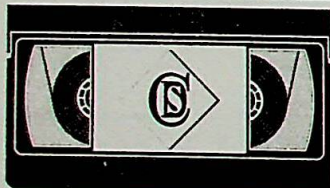
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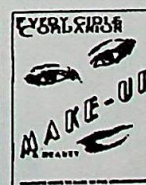
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C'MON!!

OH NO!

I KNOW

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EARLY, BUT THE
BABY'S ABOUT TO
COME NOW!!

LET'S GO!
-- OF ALL TIMES FOR YOU
TO BE DRESSED!!

WOW
HURRY!

LET'S GET TO THE
HOSPITAL NOW!

HURRY! OWOOOOOW!

DAMMMIT!
OK! * WOW!!
OK! * OK HONEY!!
OK! * OK! * WHERE IS
THAT *!!*!!*
EYE MAKEUP
REMOVER?!!
OK! * I CAN'T
FIND
ANYTHING!!
WHERE IN
THE!!*#!*! IS
THE NAIL POLISH REMOVER?!
WHERE ARE MY
MAN-PANTS??
HANG
IN THERE! SQUEEZE
IN!



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- 2: DO NOT BACK AWAY. STAY AND YOU WILL PROBABLY LEARN SOME THING VERY VALUABLE.
- 3: DO NOT ASSUME THEY ARE SOME KIND OF A FREAK OUT TO MOLEST YOUNG CHILDREN OR ANYTHING OF THE SORT. A MACHO MAN IS MORE LIKELY TO DO SOMETHING OF THE SORT.
- 4: DO NOT ASSUME THEY ARE MENTALLY ILL OR NEED A PSYCHIATRIST. THIS IS NOT AS OFTEN THE CASE AMONG CROSSDRESSERS AS IT IS AMONG OTHER PEOPLE.
- 5: DO NOT IMMEDIATELY START TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING DESIGNED TO MAKE IT CLEAR YOU ARE NOT CRAZY OR WEIRD LIKE THEY ARE. YOU ARE PROBABLY MORE WEIRD THAN THEY ARE, IF YOU HAD THE COURAGE THEY HAVE AND WOULD LET OTHER PEOPLE SEE THE REAL YOU THE WAY THEY DO.
- 6: DO NOT EXPECT THEM TO WANT TO DOMINATE THE CONVERSATION TALKING ABOUT THEIR CROSSDRESSING.
- 7: DO NOT ASK THEM HOW THEY GOT THAT WAY. INSTEAD, ASK YOUR SELF HOW YOU GOT TO BE THE WAY YOU ARE.
- 8: DO NOT ASSUME THEY ARE DYING TO HEAR ALL ABOUT CRIMINALS WHO CROSSDRESS TO AVOID DETECTION OR CAPTURE. THEY ARE AS APPALLED BY THESE HORRIBLE ACTS AS YOU ARE, IF NOT MORE SO.
- 9: DO NOT EXPECT THEM TO BE UNWILLING TO SHARE HOW THEY FEEL WITH YOU, IF YOU WILL BE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN ACCEPTING THEM AND IN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THEM.
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